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THE POETRY OF BYRON.

BY LEONARD A. COMPTON-RICKETT.

"O talk to me not of a name great in story,
The days of our youth are the days of our glory,
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two and twenty
Are worth all your laurels though ever so plenty."

IT would be difficult to convey more of Byron in four lines than do the above. They vibrate with the passion which is the prerogative of adolescent years, and which invests Byron with that "daring, dash and grandiosity" ascribed to him by Goethe.

One feels that such poems are flung off like foam from the tossing head of a charger suddenly brought to a stand by the curb.

Goethe praised his English brother poet because of the positive note of his personality, maintaining that "everything great is formative."

Passion and satire are the two categories of Byron's poetry, and the personality is strongly impressed on both.

"The Isles of Greece" is stamped with the impress of his passion and melancholy. In it he rises to such noble heights it is no wonder that Tennyson admired the poem long after his boyish hero-worship for him was over.

With what effect Byron uses the repetition in the first line of the poem!

"The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sapho loved and sung;
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose and Phæbus sprung!
Eternal Summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their Sun, is set."

It may not be good criticism to read his poetry in the light of his life, but it is difficult not to do so, as his lines take so strong a colouring from his personal hopes and fears and actions. So one feels Byron is speaking for himself in such lines as

"I dreamed that Greece might still be free."

In the stanzas below we touch the naked nerves of that power by which he went forth to die for Greece

and liberty; the driving force of his nature gathers itself up in such lines—

"Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush? Our fathers bled:
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred give but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!"

"What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!
'Tis but the living who are dumb.'"

—which culminate with such sure dramatic instinct in the last lines:—

"A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine,
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine."

When any artistic conception reaches a certain degree of intensity a point is reached which corresponds to the boiling point of a liquid; the spiritual pressure in the personal consciousness expands and becomes an integral part of nations, diffusing its experience over millions of minds.

In "The Destruction of Sennacherib" there is richer colouring, and slower movement, while the voice is more subdued.

"And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee."

Every line of this poem is chiselled cleanly into a drama-picture.

The imagery of Summer's forest leaves and Autumn's forest leaves suggests at a glance an army of the living and an army of the dead.

"For the angel of Death spread his wings on the blast
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed."

The same bold touch describes the equine slaver:

"And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf
And cold as the spray on the rock-beating surf."

Now take the last verse in its entirety for purposes of effect:

"And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

The writer has still to search poetry for a finer metaphor than is presented in the last two lines. It is the World picture of aspiring Man struggling with Fate, the unknown Angel with whom he wrestles all his life and who touches him with helpless suffering and death.

In the apostrophe to the Sun in "Manfred," scene 2, the poet most nearly approaches spiritual exaltation:

Herman. My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset:

He sinks behind the mountain.

Manfred. Doth he so?

I will look on him.

(*Manfred advances to the window of the hall.*)
Glorious Orb!

Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladdened on their mountain-tops the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they poured
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star!
Sire of the seasons, Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects; thou dost rise
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!"

By way of comparison listen to Milton's invocation of Light in "Paradise Lost":

"Hail, holy Light! Offspring of Heaven first born,
And of the Eternal, Co-eternal Beam;
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,
And never but in unapproach'd light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate."

Here the reader has far greater compression of feeling, more sense of mass that glows with the splendour of sublimity.

Compare also Coleridge's outpouring of adoration in his Hymn before sunrise to Mont Blanc.

Here the poet loses himself in his rapture even more completely than Milton does.

A few lines must suffice from this magnificent.

"O dread and silent Mount! I gaze upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.
Yet like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,
Yea with my life and life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Rise like a cloud of incense from the Earth!
Thou kingly spirit enthroned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God."

Byron's passionate poetry divides itself into the splendid and the tender. When the defiant pride, so typical of the poet, exhausts itself his heart is free to dissolve in the many tender lyrics that are scattered about among the Hebrew melodies and elsewhere—

"She walks in beauty like the Night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes."

A gem too—

"Ah! snatched away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no pond'rous tomb";

closing with the reflection that stoicism cannot stay the tears of humanity.

"And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet."

The mournfulness that overwhelms the wakeful during the long hours of night is well expressed in the verse:

"Sun of the sleepless! melancholy star!
Whose tearful gleam glows tremulously far,
Thou show'st the darkness thou canst not dispel,
How like are thou to joy remembered well!
So gleams the past, the light of other days,
Which shines but warms not with its powerless rays;
A night-beam sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant—clear—but Oh, how cold!"

The penultimate line needed recasting, though it is compensated for by the last.

Tennyson has struck off the same experience, according to the method he deliberately cultivated, in one line of "Locksley Hall."

"In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof."

Mr. Stopford Brooke contrasts this Tennysonian precipitation of experience with the gradual accumulation of imagery used by the genius of Coleridge, and on the whole prefers Coleridge's way which is the way of Byron here.

Most of Byron's early work published under "Occasional Pieces" is bad. It lacks music probably because on the one hand it had insufficient emotion to carry it bodily into rhythm, and on the other hand his dexterity at word-craft was not enough to superficially hide the lack.

"Thin and heady" is certainly not an inapt expression for most of his early efforts. In addition to what has been quoted, something better shows itself here and there.

"If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?—
With silence and tears."

"Maid of Athens ere we part" is something also with charm and should be included in an anthology of his poems.

And again:

"He heard it, but he heeded not; his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away."

When we come to the satirical vein of "Don Juan," however, we see that his poetic genius has discovered its metier. The preceding poem "Beppo" is virtually a part of "Don Juan," that is to say the same spirit and form are manifesting themselves.

How much might be quoted of last lines! For Byron like Wordsworth is singularly felicitous in last lines. The former in the term of Tennyson is "endlessly clever," especially in final couplets, while Wordsworth gathers himself together and breaks like a wave. Associating thus for a moment the names of Wordsworth and Byron it is interesting to read Matthew Arnold's elevation of Byron as a com-

peer of Wordsworth above Coleridge, Keats and Shelley. He says a dozen pages or two of Keats and Coleridge are equal if not superior to Byron, but the remaining poetry is far inferior. Shelley "praises Byron too unreservedly, but he sincerely felt, and was right in feeling, that Byron was a greater poetical power than himself."

Matthew Arnold interprets a sudden extravagance of a poet's admiration for a poet as a piece of serious comparative criticism. Was it not Charles Kingsley who thought that beefsteaks and boxing were points in favour of Byron as against his vegetarian contemporary?

Byron excelled at rhyme, not rhythm. For exhibitions of sheer mastery in rhyming he ranks above Shakespeare or any English poet. The late W. S. Gilbert pressed after him in this respect with his "strategy" and "sat a gee," etc.

The fragment found on the back of "Don Juan's" first Canto is worth quoting because it expresses a mood of abandonment so common to humanity.

"I would to heaven that I were so much clay
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling—
Because at least the past were past away—
And for the future—(but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say—the future is a serious matter—
And so—for God's sake—hock and soda water!"

Recognising Byron's unphilosophical cast of mind and Coleridge's "holy jungle" of German metaphysics (which we would not call a holy jumble of German metaphysics) the reader smiles at such lines in the 2nd verse of the 1st Canto.

"And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing

Explaining metaphysics to the nation,
I wish he would explain his explanation."

Probably many another with metaphysical pretensions felt the same but did not care to put it so tersely. With a droll finality Byron disposes of Ireland's chief philosopher in the lines

"When Berkley said there was no matter
'Twas no matter what he said."

The following may be taken as a sample of the "Don Juan" style:

"Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
The unexpected death of some old lady
Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
Who've made 'us youth' wait too—too long
already
For an estate or cash or county seat,
Still breaking, but with stamina so steady
That all the Israelites are fit to mob its
Next owner for their double-damned post-obits."

He loves to give rein to the spirit of reckless revelry in such lines as

"Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after."

The soda-water may have been the beverage on both occasions so far as he personally was concerned.

More forcibly he expresses the same thought in a parallel passage—

"And after they have wine and dined and whored
The Family vault receives another lord."

We come across the same raillery at "Woman" and philosophy in the 2nd verse of the 6th Canto.

"There is a tide in the affairs of Women
Which taken at the flood, leads—God knows
where:
Those navigators must be able seamen

Whose charts lay down its currents to a hair,
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen

With its strange whirls and eddies can compare:
Men with their heads reflect on this and that—
But women with their hearts on heaven knows
what."

He is capable at the same time of laughing at his own expense:

"I do not quite know what I mean myself
When now and then I would be very fine."

In which flippant reflection he raises and passes over the question of whether a poet can formulate and justify intellectually that which his inspiration sanctions.

How clearly "Beppo" is allied as a poem to "Don Juan" can be gathered from the first verse.

"'Tis known, at least it should be, that throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
The people take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance ere they grow devout,
However high their rank or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, mask-
ing,
And other things that may be had for asking."

In characters such as Cain and Lucifer he finds fitting *dramatis personæ* for his own feelings, especially before they took a more cynical turn. Where before he declaimed his wrongs from a thunder-cloud he afterwards contents himself with scoffing at the enemy, and does so with increasing technical skill.

"Who killed John Keats?
I, said the Quarterly,
Savage and tartarly:
'Twas one of my feats."

Here he manages to hit out in two directions at once.

Byron began in the lyrical strain, turned to the narrative and dramatic, and ended up by being something of an essayist in rhyme.

The following from "The Siege of Corinth" has been justly admired: he is describing the dogs:

"Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a tartar's skull they had stripped the flesh
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter
skull,
As it slipped through their jaws when the edge
grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where
they fed;

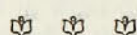
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf."

With his strong instinct for effects one wonders whether had he lived he would have gone the broad and wordy way of most poets that leads to dramatic destruction. He must have admired the masterly achievement of Shelley in "The Cenci" where the dark passions of the heart are concentrated and constricted into a power that Byron in his wildest mood never attained. Yet it was so native to the demoniac gloom of Byron's genius that we learn with some surprise that its author was "an ineffectual angel."

Passion and wit are the positive elements of Byron's poetry with a wealth of descriptive power, and a dramatic feeling that best expresses itself in his lyrical flights. No curious felicities are to be found as in Shakespeare, Keats and Tennyson, no complete mastery of vowels and rhythms that give the full-flowing rise and fall of song; no philosophy, but rhyming that was as neat in its way as Pope's finish, and a passion Pope never possessed.

VIEWS AND COMMENTS.

THE offending aspect of the pretensions of "democracy" is not that in the name of what the "majority" supposedly thinks we are supposed to be pleased and happy to be "ruled" by a clique "for our good." Far from it, since, in truth, but few of us are "ruled" at all. It is merely our little foible to pretend we are. We give our "rulers" to understand they "rule" us because it pleases them so greatly to think they do: and then there is the consideration that a docile demeanour serves to divert their too kind attention; probably the most servile-seeming member of a "state" the most bent upon fulfilling the rôle of step-grandmother fundamentally is untouched by "rule." The obedient attitude is a very convenient garb for the perverse to wear: and if the mere doing of it does not jar the temper too much, appearing to submit will define the line of least resistance to doing what, under the circumstances is what we please. Thus under the shelter of the servile demeanour there forms a residue of mulish waywardness, especially in those who appear to present their parts to receive the kicks which keep them going between gutter and cess-pool: a waywardness which even more than temper succeeds in making them into a kind of clay unmeet to the hand which would govern. The great unwashed will accept the infliction of the bath which cuts a slice off the space of their limited premises with resignation and reflect that it will indeed have a use as a wardrobe and coal-place. Though they are cast down by such things they are not defeated. "Rule" slides from them, as water slides from a duck. "Rule" has effect only on those who are indoctrinated with the Dogma: those who are under the spell of the "Word." Even these—these intellectuals—are not placed in bondage by the rulers: theirs is a voluntary bondage—true freedom, according to the Word—and if they act as automata it is that they subscribe to the dogma that it is their duty to be as automata. They submit themselves to the law: because they approve not always indeed of the law, but of the attitude which submits to law.



It is not therefore for its supposed prowess in the line of government that democracy's claims are obnoxious. It earns its odium through the commodity which the "rulers" offer in exchange for their investiture with authority to govern. "Rulers" appear contemptible not for what they take but what they give. That they lay hold of authority and all the ready cash which their positions render available is, if regrettable, yet tolerable: the machine will go until it breaks; the vexatious thing is that in order to become installed in their position of advantage they must needs undermine and bemuse by flattery the intelligence of those whose lack of it is sufficiently evidenced by their willingness to have truck with them.



Once upon a time, we heard—or read—about a soldier belonging to the ranks who by the workings of some chance which we forget, found himself dining at the officers' mess. Finding himself unable to guess the use to which he might be expected to put ice which was placed before him, he hazarded putting it in the soup; whereupon the officers laughed: all, that is, save one—the highest in rank. This noble one, in order to administer the rebuke to the manners of his brother-officers, and further to cover the confusion of the guest, straightway placed ice in his soup also. This edifying story as we remember it did not stop at this point but went on to explain how true gentility and true democracy reveal themselves in so

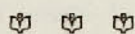
fine an essence of Christian good-breeding, but it will serve our purpose better to regard the story as here finished and use it as an analogy in a totally different sense, thus: those who use the flattery of the democratic "equality" argument in order to win the support of the mob do their uttermost to confuse the import of "gentility": how far they have succeeded the influence of the concept of "natural rights" bears witness. They encourage "claims" to be laid to things which from their nature can only be freely given. A delicacy which merely seeks not to press the confusion which error brings in misconstrued into a concession that no error exists: rather, indeed, that those who fail to perpetuate it are themselves in error.



Every new creed is ninety-nine parts *réchauffé* of all the creeds which by virtue of its hundredth part it is supposed to supersede: the fact that the ingredients are incongruous proving no bar to such relashing. To mince the whole to a uniform state of non-recognition where possible, and to accept whole what resists the process according to its external merits, is the method of treatment. Naturally therefore in the cult of equality-cum-democracy it is not surprising to be met with the spirit of "Noblesse oblige," notwithstanding the fact that democracy knows no "Noblesse." How this curious combination of exclusives is worked in together is illustrated by the incident narrated above. The "noble" officer acted in the spirit which lies behind the attitude "Noblesse oblige"—the attitude that a superior can always afford to concede a point: it is the spirit of chivalry: the meaning of the handicap: it is to be found almost everywhere where the relatively strong and weak, superior and inferior meet together. It is the swagger of the superior at their subtlest and suavest, since it wins a conscious recognition of superiority by the very act which would seem to minimise it. Now the confusion which is effected by the demagogues: those would-be rulers who in order to win their way to authority must flatter the mob, lies in the implication that while still "Noblesse oblige," the tacit acknowledgment of relative merit on which it is built is there no longer. It has been submerged in democratic equality. Therefore a superior not merely *may* ice his soup: he *ought* and *must*; in fact, we supposedly, all prefer iced soup now: the new creed having created a new procedure. If incompetence is the equal of competence and the incompetent outnumber the competent, then by the "right" of democracy and the "will of the greatest number" the incompetent must set the procedure. There is nothing of course in the ways of procedure already existing which is not the result of "class" prejudice and autocratic naughtiness: nothing in the relative quality of men's intelligence and the nature of things otherwise to explain why the relative positions have arranged themselves as they have. All this wicked disparity is purely superficial and will be combated by a judicious mixture of scolding and pleading. Hark unto Mr. Lansbury's paper on the subject: "Every private must be as free as any dandy officer." "Must" no less! Suppose he had said "can be"! Why did he not? Presumably because "he" can't be. Then what is the route, between point and point of which, "Can't be" becomes "Must be" in a mind like Mr. Lansbury's? What magic human alchemy is worked on the way and who works it? Mr. Asquith or Mr. Macdonald or even Mr. Lansbury himself? Or does Mr. Lansbury find hope in the temper of "privates" themselves? To us they seem to be conspicuously silent. We may be sure the privates are as free as they can be, and when they can be more free, they will be. "Free" is such an odd

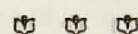
sort of a word. It has the power of suggesting itself to be something which can be conferred, like rations and uniforms, and yet when it has been followed through a long series of disillusionings it lets one down to the truth that it is in itself representative only; it merely marks the limit of one's individual power, like the index-needle on those machines where one hits on a sort of anvil with a hammer to test one's strength. The index will move up and down the scale in the most obliging manner within the limits of one's power to strike. And similarly with the privates' freedom: it is anything their power can make it. If their power of "freedom" were equal to that of officers: why did they not become officers and so become "free" and dandy too? They would then have avoided the grounds of suspicion that it was less. It is to be assumed they did not become privates because in comparison with being officers they preferred to. Parents' poverty? But we must accept parents. Our parents are our one not-uncertain inheritance. What they are and what they do is part of what one inevitably comes by, inevitably as we come by our features and our gifts. Unequal opportunity? But there can be no *equal* opportunities. Moreover Fortune keeps in stock at least ten thousand opportunities per man. It is not the opportunities that are lacking but the power to accept them. And if all, out of a man's ten thousand opportunities fail to suit, it always lies open to him to create a wholly new one unique for himself. . . . All of which may well appear if not indeed, but doubtfully true, at least quite unhelpful as to the telling. To which the reply is that it is quite true and would be helpful to a real democrat, if only one could find such. As a matter of fact, this "democrat" is a very rare bird and not a nice one. The illusion that he exists in his hundreds of thousands is a simple fiction put into currency by journalists: "democracy" a label unmeritedly attached to a community of self-respecting egoistic common-sense people, who only very occasionally and shamefacedly talk about their abstract rights, equality, the will of the people and the rest. There is not, for instance, one person in one hundred thousand who could recite this tirade of Mr. Lansbury's with an unembarrassed countenance.

"There seem to be two recognised and main ways of serving humanity. The exponent of one method deduces from his love of people in general a love of himself in particular. Charity, he argues, enlightenment, idealism—these must begin at home; and with a loyal and logical conscience he proceeds to bleed out of that same suffering world either fortune or social position, influence, power. And for the damnable wholeness of his flesh (if men had but the eyes to see it) the leprosy of humanity festers and reeks the more."—*Daily Herald*, Saturday, April 11.



In fact, the conclusion to which one is pressed is that we—that is the people who talk and write—take all theories, politics and propagandas too seriously: far more so than ever was intended by those who amuse themselves by such species of Sport. The permanent rôle of propagandists and politicians is that of public entertainer; and they stand or fall by the answer to the question, "Do they entertain?" And it must be admitted that they still exert a draw. Star turns like Sir Edward Carson or Mr. Asquith can compete without shame with a football match before the season gets exciting: with a "cinema" entertainment. It is true that they have the entire strength of the advertising power of the Press of both parties to boost them and create a fictitious interest. The minor characters of course have a harder time of it, though for these the services of the Press are always available. The "principles," the "creeds" of politicians have nothing to do with their pull on the public attention: everything depends upon their ability to organise a good display (whether they run

a one-man show or a team matters nothing) which will provide a reasonable excuse for the backers of the favourite, or the home team, shouting themselves delirious with delight. When politicians, through some defect of horse-sense, mistake their vocation, and imagine themselves to be teachers and preachers with a message and think that the message will make good their failure to entertain with the public, they are quickly put to rights. The present unpopularity of the suffragettes following so rapidly on their former popularity will illustrate the case. When their "propaganda" was worked as a smart, prompt, unfailingly successful *show*, it was an enthusiastic success: a sort of Vesta Tilley on the political stage. Now that it has betaken itself to seriousness, to stretchers, "tragedies" and ugly scenes, it is vaguely disliked by its former enthusiastic backers. Their "principle" is exactly what it was, but because the entertainment they put on the boards is voted a poor show, what were "heralds of the dawn" are now labelled misguided fanatics. Sir Edward Carson offers another instance. It is because he has made it clear he can put up a smart exhilarating show that the "people" are prepared to offer to the Conservative Grand Opera Company a prospect of future patronage; and Mr. Balfour showed a sure "statesmanship" in picking up the cue and appearing as stump orator in Hyde Park. Again—Mr. Asquith. He was intelligent enough to see that it was not an argument the recent "political" situation required: it was a counter-hero: and did his best. Very nicely too: his success can be gauged by what his audience was prepared to swallow whole. A more laughable speech was never uttered than the one this gentleman offered at Ladybank a week ago. Had he not been a "hero" it would have been riddled through with laughter. Consider the remark: the top-note on which he was bold enough even to pause—for applause: "The Army will hear nothing of politics from me, and in return I expect to hear nothing of politics from the Army." You bet he doesn't. The "Army will hear nothing of politics from me." Of course not, but to make a "ruler" gaily ruling hear something of politics from them is the Army's very proper business. One must confess that so finely-nerved a stroke commands one's admiration. After this master-stroke "your army" is merely the purring approval a pleased operator will show to a patient who has stood a trying operation well.



Still, Mr. Asquith must have felt he was making a desperate, neck-or-nothing experiment. It must be a wearing method of providing for a wife and family of an elderly gentleman to accept all odds offered, on the strength of one's ability to move to slow music and talk vague theory in a *recitative* calculated to hypnotise any intelligence which may be lurking hidden in one's audience. Melodrama is dangerous as an occupation for people past their first youth: one snigger from a devotee suddenly illumined with an intelligent gleam might destroy the career into which have been built the hopes of a lifetime. It seems inevitable politicians will be driven seriously to consider the advisability of getting a little ahead of the more lagging intelligences, by changing their rôle from melodrama to comedy. The change will melt away their dignity; the sense of the actual thrown on heroics is a sure solvent, but on the precipitate of comic relief which the process ultimately throws down will be laid a far surer foundation for those "careers" from which they hope so much. There is in short a far greater scope for display of talent in a character of W. S. Gilbert, than in the most heroic of Grand Opera heroes, and a Dan Leno will go far deeper into the affections of the public than can a Sir Henry Irving; accordingly a politician who worked indiscretion into a conscious habit, who

allowed *fact* to make its commentary on the *interpretation* of facts, baiting the interpretation with the fact as the comic spirit baits the "noble" one, such a one would really enrich the community with a new kind of art. If a clever man entered political circles with the realisation that by the side of, say, the collected political utterances of a "correct" politician like Sir Edward Grey, the simple narration of a servant girl's carryings-on with the butcher's man is an artistic document of relatively high worth, dullness which is the only evil would take wings and depart. The actual doings of politicians must have some human interest: whereas those by which they choose to be known in public have none. Instantly the veil slips aside, things become luminous. Turned indiscreet side out, they lose their smug smoothness. An indiscreet politician assisted in well-doing by an indiscreet press would realise that their proper business is just with those things which at present are enabled remotely to tickle our sense in the shape of the scandalous memoirs of circles now fifty years dead. Scandal, in short, is the only news worth retailing. It represents public life in earnest whereas at present we get public life by pretence. There is scope for a "creative" genius in such a rôle.

The Law of the Talons.

BY REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.

I.

The apple on the treetop high
Ripens, and no man wonders why;
Unless the boys should steal it now,
'Twill grow 'neath Heaven's smile and frown;
And when it rots from off the bough
The apple falls not up, but down.—
Yet if you ask me why that's so,
Indeed, indeed, I do not know.

*Perhaps it does as me and you:
Because the other apples do;
Perhaps it tumbles in the dust
(Again like us) because it must.*

II.

The Boss, he builds his mill foursquare
With money got I can't say where;
He offers me "The Right To Work"—
And wages? Well, he pays me just
Enough, if I don't sicken or shirk,
To keep my body from the dust.
He gives me leave to live, and I
Give him the work he lives on, which
Seems right enough, for I don't die
And he keeps on a-getting rich.
"Small wage!" says you. And: "Why so?"—
Well,
Upon my word, I cannot tell.

*Perhaps the Boss like any man,
Pays a small wage because he can;
His money is his own, you bet!
And mine? Why, mine's what I can get.*

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"Dramatic Actualities."*

IT is astonishing how little even the best of us knows. Not a fortnight ago I had to admit to several jeering elders that I had never heard of Father Tyrell and never known of the existence of the modernist heresy. And now while we have all been moving complacently through our daily banalities, Mr. W. L. George has been writing articles to literary journals on the state of contemporary drama. Astonishing! I had thought that there was no contemporary drama, or so little that it was hardly noticeable; I had supposed that one only went to the theatre to escape doing something which requires thought; and I had come to believe that, with the great exception of Mr. Yeats, the drama was a trade and not an art. And all this time Mr. George has been seeing plays and reading plays and writing about plays. I am seriously impressed by his knowledge of modern dramatic productions. He talks about "The Man from Blankley's" and Maeterlinck and "Hindle Wakes" and Mr. Rann Kennedy in a most professional and nonchalant manner. It is great; it is prodigious. Here have I been living among people who call themselves informed and cultured and so forth and no one has ever told me about Mr. Rann Kennedy or "The Man from Blankley's." I am most curious about them. I gather that Mr. Kennedy is a playwright and "The Man from Blankley's" a play, and not a literary pseudonym; this knowledge I owe to Mr. George's considerate use of inverted commas—"quotes," I think they are called now in good literary society. But beyond this mere increase in knowledge, which though valuable in itself is perhaps inconsiderable, Mr. George's "Dramatic Actualities" does much towards broadening the mind of any mere man-of-letters. I learn for the first time what the Common Man—one of those "simple steady millions who labour eight to ten hours a day in office and workshop"—thinks of the drama; and then again I learn what Mr. George thinks of the moral opinion of the Common Man, of his religious belief. Moreover I find in Mr. George's Common Man a delightful catholicity of taste; he (the C. M.) apparently enjoys equally the stage-setting of Sir H. B. Tree and of Mr. Gordon Craig; he demands a light touch; he must be cheated and coaxed; and he likes powder and patches, duels and elopements. All this is profoundly interesting, though, perhaps, not always immediately connected with the drama. Yet I admit that after I had read Mr. George's four essays my mind was in a state of some confusion. "What is he getting at?" I asked myself, "Where is this admirably handled information and clever argument taking me? What does he want to prove? Why is he first a dramatic critic attacking the drama of ideas, then a common man pleading that Synge is obscure and 'Justice' a grinding misery, and then himself again attacking his former husk 'the Common Man' for prejudices against 'unpleasant' and 'religious' plays?"

Now that I have re-read Mr. George's essays and pondered them I am not quite convinced that my confusion of mind was due to my own stupidity. I suggest that Mr. George wrote his essays at different times, from somewhat different standpoints, and with different ideas to propagate. Hence the four sections of "Dramatic Actualities" do not cohere; and I believe I am right when I say that modern prose writers, among whom Mr. George is properly considered to be distinguished, aim at clarity and preciseness.

If the articles are taken separately the argument in each is fairly apparent. In "Dramatic Criteria" Mr. George admirably sums up the ten chief technical faults of the drama of ideas. I will not repeat them

* "Dramatic Actualities." By W. L. George. (Sidgwick & Jackson. 2/-.)

here, because people must buy Mr. George's book. It is enough to say that they are very able diagnoses and that nearly all the plays of ideas are proved to suffer from one or more of these artistic errors. The criticism of Mr. Shaw, Mr. Jerome, and of other dramatists is just, but what are we to think of a dramatic critic who prefers "Salome" to "The Importance of being Earnest," and bases his hope for the future of English plays on Mr. Bennet and Mr. Masefield? I have watched Mr. Bennet's plays with interest—the kind of interest one takes in a magazine story—and I do not doubt Mr. Masefield's great talents. But the future of the drama, the art of the stage, is, I think, in other and perhaps even worthier hands. Mr. Yeats alone among modern English writers of drama has produced plays which age will not wither and which possess all the qualities of beauty and emotion which we desire from a great work of art. In a lecture Mr. Yeats has criticised what he calls the "topical drama," the drama which is without joy, the drama with a purpose, without the enduring power of arousing emotion, without beauty. Revive the plays of fifteen years ago—says Mr. Yeats—of five years ago, even of last year; how many of them would be utterly stale, unattractive to everyone, almost incomprehensible from that very "topicalness" which ensured their immediate but ephemeral success. The plays of Synge and of Mr. Yeats are among the oldest that Mr. George mentions; they are also the freshest and most genuinely pleasurable.

I do not intend to deal with the other three essays so extensively. It is enough to remark that the second essay has for its subject that yearning of the Common Man for the now antiquated drama of ideas—only he yearns for it to be diluted to suit his own tastes. Mr. George pleads for the introduction of "comic relief" in the drama of ideas (though it would appear that Mr. Shaw at least has introduced plenty); he quotes the Shakespearian uses of the clown, the jests, the songs &c., with which Shakespeare used to obtain the favour of the groundlings. And, yes, Aristophanes threw nuts to the Athenian mob to gain their applause and votes—it is an old trick, "but is it art?" Perhaps when Mr. George produces a play he will come on the stage as his own chorodidaskalos and throw cigars to the gallery to propitiate their goodwill.

The most astounding remark in Mr. George's book occurs in "Plays Unpleasant." He says "The bourgeois is not always wrong; as a judge of technique it is always right, for it quite clearly imposes upon works that purport to be art that first condition of art—form." Osiris! What a statement! Ibsen was one of the greatest masters of dramatic form—how the bourgeois adored him! Whistler the divine "arranger" of form—how they loved him! Flaubert—the master novelist—how they study him! Mr. Conrad—but "Chance" has caught on. . . .

Dramatic Actualities ought to start an unusual process in the "common man's" mind—that of thought. Whether Mr. George believes all he says does not matter. The pity is that he has wasted his agreeable talent and technique on the criticism of plays, most of which are merely transitory and whose very names will be forgotten within a score of years—even by the common man.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

Liberations:

Studies of Individuality in Contemporary Music.

II. BALILLA PRATELLA AND FUTURIST MUSIC.

"If you turn backward to count the links of the chain which connects your thought with the minds of the dead and the petrified the strong chord which holds you to life will slip from your grasp.

Shout then, O man, wide-mouthed, that your voice may be carried on the wind of to-morrow!"
—Paolo Buzzi [From *Versi Liberi* in the *Book of the Futurist Poets*].

THE works of a creative artist are necessarily the statement of his personal desires and the record of his personal experience and achievement, and their value is proportionate to the development of his individuality. The creative faculty is the absolute possession of the individual mind. The mass being solely reproductive is incapable of creation, and the artistic forms which come into its possession are reduced, by reason of this incapacity, to the level of reproductive machinery which, as all mechanism, grows inadequate with the progress of evolution and must necessarily become worn-out with use. Hence it follows that although the necessity of an effective artistic medium is evident, it is absurd to attempt to limit creative activity by existing standards, as such limitation can result only in an inadequate mode of expression. The theory of a fixed standard of art and beauty is an excuse invented by mediocrity to cover its creative impotence.

With the increased scope of thought and achievement the traditional limits and forms resultant therefrom have ceased to have application to contemporary life and art conditions. In all spheres of civilisation to-day there is a growing consciousness of new elements. With the discoveries of science and the invention and perfection of new types of mechanism, the external aspect of life has undergone a complete change, and this has naturally caused a corresponding alteration in the mental standpoint of the artist. With the attainment of increased speed and the new capacity for flight the old conceptions of time, space, and distance have ceased to exist. Thus we are conscious of a new freedom resulting on and proceeding from a realisation of new dimensions. It has become necessary to revise our attitude in regard to almost everything. Life has become swifter and more dynamic in its manifestations and constant activity is necessary to cope with the possibilities which each day opens up. Vigour and continual concentration are more imperative now than at any preceding time. Experimenting with new forces, many of which we as yet understand imperfectly, every moment reveals strange possibilities: every movement is fraught with tremendous consequences. We cannot return to ancient lore for guidance: the experience of the past deals with things which are now obsolete or obstructive and its laws have no application to conditions of which it had no conception. The mental and physical aspects of to-day are the direct outcome of elements which have never until now entered into the life of humanity and it is impossible to estimate them by the old standards. Moreover the reverence of tradition is retrospective and retrospection is a sign of inactivity and decrepitude. An era of action has commenced which demands courage, the faculty of acute analysis and scientific thought to control and direct its forces. To do this it is necessary to concentrate on the present with a continual view to the future possibilities of each effort. In short a total revision of values has become imperative; a complete revolution against the fixed conceptions of the past. The internal quality requisite for such a revolution has been excellently summarised by a sentence in "La Necessità della Rivoluzione" by Giovanni Papini, himself a Futurist Leader—"La vera rivoluzione comincia nelle teste e non già sulle barricate" [The true revolution commences in the head and not on the barricades]. The value of individuality becomes therefore increasingly apparent since the public, as all masses in time of revolution, is incapable of grasping anything beyond the momentary significance of events. Intellect is the requisite quality to-day and the mass is, before all things, emotional. Drastic measures are necessary to awaken the world from apathy and sentimentalism to the sane sense of pro-

portion which analysis and science have revealed. To attain this result an aggressive spirit is necessary which will concede nothing to sentiment or superstition and which will ruthlessly destroy all things which obstruct expansion and personality. The realisation of this necessity has brought into being the movement known as Futurism which seeks to infuse all branches of art with a spirit of liberation and anti-traditionalism. Being the direct product of contemporary conditions the influence of Futurist conceptions on music is exceedingly valuable by reason of the opportunity for individual expression which it renders possible.

The leader of Futurist music is Balilla Pratella, a young musician of Bologna. His first appearance in Continental music proper took place with the production of his Futurist opera "*La Sina d'Vargoün*" in the Teatro Comunale at Bologna, December, 1909, the work itself being winner of a prize of 10,000 lire left for competition by the will of Cincinnato Baruzzi. The committee of judges consisted of the composers Pietro Mascagni, Giacomo Orefice, Guglielmo Mattioli, Rudolfo Ferrari and the critic Gian Battista Nappi. The performance met with an enthusiastic reception, which was a double compliment to the composer, both poem and music being from his pen. This work marks the commencement of a new era in Italian music. Though the text is written in liberated verse it is the logical conclusion of the lyrical music dramas of Bruneau and Charpentier which are set to a prose libretto and which it transcends in dynamic expression through the rhythmic quality of its literary basis. Since that time Pratella has composed other important works and has issued several manifestoes, propagandist and technical, and a musical manual entitled "*La Teoria della Musica*" and the whole trend of his writing, musical and otherwise, shows him to be the possessor of an exceedingly virile and logical intellect which expresses itself with a force and sincerity commanding respect and consideration. Violent and audacious as the manifestoes are, chaotic and revolutionary as his music may seem to some, the motive beneath evinces no reckless destructiveness for mere love of the act itself. Living in a swift age, his vigorous spirit frets against all obstacles which impede his progress and he strives passionately for their removal, knowing that the time which is spent in surmounting them would be more profitably employed in exploring new paths. Scientific destruction of refuse and decayed matter, material or intellectual, is absolutely necessary for the health of the world. The outworn planet revolves unproductively and monotonously until collision with another body results in its destruction, but from the chaotic nebula are produced new worlds and new life. This scientific fact may be taken as a simile of the conception underlying Futurist propaganda. Extravagance alone seems generally recognised as the principal feature of the new movement without consideration of the virile elements of which this extravagance is only the healthy exuberance. If the sage loses touch with laughter, burlesque or any other manifestation of healthy life he ceases to exercise certain important functions and lack of exercise brings about that incapacity and impotence which are disease. Hence the gradual decrepitude of the majority of philosophers. But beneath the raillery and extravagance exhibited in the writings of Marinetti, Papini, Soffici and in a lesser degree in those of Pratella lies an indomitable purpose, a human, materialistic and highly scientific conception; not the erection of useless monuments destined to obstruct the progress of the future, but the construction of light and effective edifices which, serving a material purpose, shall remain standing only until some superior form be discovered.

The manifestoes of Pratella show an acute appreciation of the new forces which science has brought into the mental world. They contain logical and excellently constructed arguments for the complete

freedom of the musical creator and a progressive outlook always a little in advance of the majority of his fellow composers. Emancipation of the student from conditions which are no longer effective; liberation of rhythm from the monotonous domination of accepted time-theories; destruction of every outworn formula and suppression of musical sentimentalism and superstition, creation with a view to future potentialities and the conception of an enharmonic theme system to supersede that incongruous harmonic counterpoint which has had so baleful an influence on music; these are the chief features of his extremely logical writings, conclusions to which the rhythmic experiments of Ernest Austin, Karg Elert, Cyril Scott and Sibelius, and the thematic innovations of Bartok Kodaly Schönberg, Scriabin and Stravinsky give added significance.

In the early part of 1909, Professor Granville Bantock drew my attention to modern "horizontal" free counterpoint as opposed to "vertical" or harmonic chordal writing. Pratella, in a technical manifesto of 1911, seems to have realised the logical conclusion of this tendency in the enharmonic theme theory already alluded to. This conception he pronounces to be "no other than the synthesis of harmony," further explaining it as the fusion of contrapuntal and harmonic expression in a flowing thematic line which by its successive tones traverses and enunciates its internal harmonic qualities. A similar broad conception is displayed in the rhythmic system by which he replaces the inadequate details of time theories. Musical time, as generally understood, is essentially a product of the mass, and so far as we can see originated in collective labour being called into service to regulate the movements of bodies of primitive workers who, being ignorant of any system of manual technique, had to rely on the substitution of patience and endurance. In the ordinary work of civilised communities the time-beat has lost its original significance, having now but little practical application save for the purposes of drill and marching. But the inherently inert attitude of the mass being always reluctant to relinquish any mechanical traditions which are enveloped in sentimental associations and which have become familiar by means of constant repetition, have insisted on the perpetuation of time in the crude pulsations of popular dances and the consequent traditional forms. In consequence of this, rhythm, which is a fundamental element of music in a greater degree than that of any other art save dancing, has become restricted by a system of monotonous time limitations. This has resulted in the stagnation of true rhythm and the constraint of individual expression through rhythmic development.

Pratella, realising the evident menace to artistic expansion occasioned by this, issued, in 1912, a manifesto entitled "*La Distruzione della Quadratura*" which affirms the necessity for complete rhythmic liberation in musical composition in a degree equal to that attained by liberated verse in poetry. The manifesto deals also with a novel system of time signatures, and condemns absolutely the degenerating influence of popular dances and the sentimental attitude of the public towards musical rhythms generally. Apart from its value as a musical treatise, the manifesto is valuable because it enables us to realise the spirit underlying the later writings of Marinetti and to perceive the lack of rhythmic vitality which popularises the Tango and other social dances, and the absence of mental vigour which permits equally monotonous and sentimental reflections on Wagner's "*Parsifal*," a work which the logical evolution of humanity has rendered futile and obsolete in spirit if not in musical expression and which has received condemnation in his Futurist letter "*Down with the Tango and Parsifal!*"

The artistic standpoint of Pratella is always characterised by a broadness which eliminates all trivial or superfluous matter and his musical writing

is the direct outcome of his mental breadth, being based in his own words on a desire "to liberate the true sensibilities of music from all imitations and influences of the past; to feel and sing with all changes towards the future, drawing inspiration and æsthetics from natural sources and traversing all the phenomena of the present, human and as yet beyond human; and to exalt the man symbol perennially rejuvenated in the varied aspects of modern life and their intimate relation with natural causes." [*Manifesto dei Musicisti Futuristi*. March, 1911.] For example, his "*Musica Futurista per Orchestra*" Op. 30, which is among his latest works, is remarkable for the graphic manner in which it synthesises the dynamic energy and mental emotionalism of contemporary thought. With the huge fortissimo passage in whole tones with which the work commences, one can almost visualise the lines of Paolo Buzzi,

"O men of yesterday, you can thrust your spears
into your breasts."

The feeling created is one of splendid egotism: at once the final repudiation of the past and the acclamation of the future. With the isolated triplet figure which breaks in at its conclusion and the rending passage which succeeds it, is apparent the reflection of the stir of contemporary life and the inexorable Futurist purpose which underlies writings like the poems of Marinetti in the volume "*Distruzione*." Thenceforward, the music progresses through a marvellous labyrinth of liberated rhythms, daringly and vigorously contrasted; traversing a stupendous succession of dynamic movements and enunciating the moods beneath them. All the traditions of academic music are flung down, broken and submerged beneath this almost terrifying rise and fall of sound. But chaotic as the music seems in many parts one is always conscious of a very sure and certain purpose underlying it, and the score itself proves on examination to be masterly in construction and is none the worse because the principals of that construction do not depend on the accepted academic theories. But the real peculiarity of Pratella's music lies not so much in the wonderful feeling of energy and movement, colour, light and velocity which it conveys, but rather in the sense of immeasurable possibilities emanating from each successive mood; and above all the almost unbounded potentiality of human efforts which it conveys. The elimination of ordinary transitions in the musical progressions, the complex poly-rhythmic treatment, and the continual flowing enharmonic theme-line, serve to create an indelible combination of images which reflect in a remarkably complete manner the impression of contemporary activity as regarded by the new scientific spirit which has entered into art. This insistence on the importance of modern life and incidents is an invariable characteristic of both Pratella's creative work and his technical and artistic theories, a peculiarity which is naturally common to the Futurist artists as a whole. The dramatic and lyrical themes of the past being conceived within the older limitations, are necessarily founded on a purely sensuous and emotional appeal. But with the entrance of intellectualism and science into art, the beauty of things has come to be sought not in their outward form but in the ideas which move them; a conception totally opposed to the accepted Grecian ideal of beauty. Animal strength to-day has given place to strength of nerves and nervous endurance. We find more interest in the expression of mental movement than in the mere graceful attitudes, postures and outlines of the human form. The older heroism, with all its machinery of emotionalism, brute force, and personal and racial feuds, has grown insignificant when viewed in contrast with the colossal struggle of mankind against unmeasured forces. All material things which, to the past, seemed monstrous and hideous and merely utilitarian, have attained heroic and

dramatic proportions as being the means whereby we shall arrive at a just estimation of the forces behind them.

Following the examples set by Whitman and Verhaeren in poetry, Pratella has concentrated his attention on the profuse energy exhibited in the tumultuous movements of modern life: the tremendous forces behind and within the workshops, factories, dockyards, locomotives, ocean steamers, aeroplanes and all machinery and the future possibilities emanating from them. This object is definitely stated in the "*Manifesto Technico della Musica Futurista*" which Pratella published in March, 1911, in which he states his purpose "to convey in music all the new attitudes of nature, and subdue them to the control of man, by virtue of incessant scientific research and discovery; to present the musical spirit of madness [i.e. the ecstatic states which transcend the normal]; to convey the great industrial songs, the tumult of train, of Transatlantic steamers, of ironclads, of automobiles, and of aeroplanes; to regard as the great central motive of the musical poem, the dominion of machinery and the victorious reign of electricity."

One might apply Stefan Zweig's characterisation of Verhaeren with equal accuracy to Pratella. For him also "a thing is the more beautiful the more finality, will, power and energy it contains. He loves our epoch because it does not disperse effort but condenses it; because it is not scattered, but concentrated for action. All that has will and an aim in view, man, machine, crowd, and town; all that vibrates, works, hammers, travels; all that bears in itself fire, impulse, electricity and feeling; all this sounds in his work. Everything lives its minute; in this multiple gear, there is no dust, no useless ornamentation; but everywhere is creation, the feeling of the future directs all action."

We who live to-day are witnessing a transformation of the world which makes individuality and a capacity for an original and scientific outlook an imperative necessity. As the aviator guides his machine unheeding above obstacles insurmountable to the feet of his forefathers, so the mind of the logical artist carries him above the laws which hampered his predecessors. Through the fine courage and constructive vision of the explorers in science and art, we owe the liberation of the world to-day, and the future will assuredly give high place to the progressive genius of Balilla Pratella.

LEIGH HENRY.

Passing Paris.

AMONG the most suggestive and instructive of art manifestations we have had within recent date are two retrospective exhibitions, one, of the works of Eva Gonzales at the Galerie Bernheim, the other of those by Berthe Morisot at the Galerie Manzi. These two exquisite women were, as we all know, the feminine exponents of the so-called "impressionist" school and Manet's only pupils. Of the two Eva Gonzales is the less familiar for the sad and simple reason that she disposed of a shorter time in which to express her charming gifts. But, limited in number though the pictures she has left be, they are no less perfect than those of her survivor. Comparison between these two can necessarily not be avoided and the present circumstance particularly invites to it. While fully appreciating the skill and charm of Berthe Morisot, one of the most beautiful painters and most dexterous of the nineteenth century, my preference goes to Eva Gonzales. In her works, showing more variety within their limited scope than is to be found in Berthe Morisot's abundant productions, appears the tenderness of a nature whose sensibility prematurely deprived the world of her talents—for she died of shock on hearing of her friend and master, Manet's death.

Berthe Morisot could, you feel, draw and paint anything. Eva Gonzales only painted what she loved. Berthe Morisot had an inexhaustible fund of spirits; Eva Gonzales was more pensive. There is heart in her work; in Berthe Morisot's there is brio, vivacity but little feeling. The latter was too competent to be called superficial but too brilliant to move more than admiration, wonderment and pleasure. There is as much knowledge in a work by Eva Gonzales but less display of it.

Both excel in taste. When it is said that the impressionists painted anything that came within their sight, nonsense is talked. The impressionists, Eva Gonzales and Berthe Morisot in particular, used great discernment in their choice of themes. True, the themes they selected were new to the period as far as artistic representation was concerned, but with what selection! what sense of the poetic or the pictorial they are chosen! Nothing is left to chance and the very ease and naturalness of the compositions are due to discrimination, taste and calculation. Where they are not, a sure intuition, the equal of reason, was the guide.

Eva Gonzales had a wonderful knack for putting her subjects in their peculiar atmospheres. Berthe Morisot inclined to place them all in a similar key. But, where the latter takes one's breath away is in the finality of the most trifling work. With her the merest dot on a piece of paper makes a picture. The present display comprises a great number of sketches in pencil, water-colour, pastel, and any one of these notes is as complete and satisfactory as a heavily colour-laden canvas. They would gain nothing by the addition of a line. Not a sketch is "scribbled," there is not a purposeless touch, yet in the oil paintings I reproach Berthe Morisot for a certain neglect of form (a mistake Eva Gonzales did not fall into) in favour of the "spot" regardless of the fact that there is not a "spot" but has its own peculiar, characteristic design. A keen sense of colour should be of assistance in the affirmation of form, and where it does not serve the double purpose it is defective.

Berthe Morisot was typically an impressionist if we take the term to mean the seizing of passing effects. A rose-garden with a bit of house behind (No. 117), a snow-scene (No. 112) demonstrate this observation. And no one better than she knew the value of quick, sparkling indication, and the precise touch which tells. Her best works are brief like the best wit.

We have among us to-day two women who, though in a different, that is, their own, way, continue the Gonzales-Morisot tradition. The first of these is Olga Boznanska, who combines the penetration Eva Gonzales would probably have brought to her work had it attained similar maturity, with the melodious colouring of Berthe Morisot. But she is more subdued than the latter; Olga Boznanska chants, Berthe Morisot twittered. Olga Boznanska is the finest painter of portraits we have in France to-day, and that is as much as to say in the world. She is more observant of form and character than Berthe Morisot and baffles one by her union of concentrated feeling and technical virtuosity, of transparency and solidity.

The other artist is an Englishwoman, Beatrice How, too talented to enjoy the celebrity she deserves in her own country, but obtaining every recognition in France. One of her pictures figured among the best of the exceptionally good selection of works bought by the State during the last year.

Jessie M. King, than whom there is no one with such a fancy for the marvellous and a surer gift of design expressed by the most delicate and masterly draughtsmanship, a woman who is the glory of British art, is also successful in France. Her work figures at the leading salons and M. René Kieffer has just commissioned her to illustrate a French translation (by Louis Fabulet and Robert d'Humières) of Kipling's "Actions and Re-actions." The lowest price of this edition will be 30 francs.

Those who only know Jessie M. King's pen and ink illustrations and decorative designs—however much they admire and understand them—have little idea of the scope of her genius—yes, I use the word boldly, without hesitation, excuse or qualification. For if an artist who finds all his inspiration within himself, whose inventiveness is boundless (you agree that genius implies invention), whose modes of expression are new and varied, who impresses by his assurance, between whose conception and its materialisation there is no hitch (Jessie M. King draws as did Blake, directly, without notes and sketches or fumbling of any kind), if such a person is not a genius then I do not know who is and withhold the title from any human being whatever.

Here, in Jessie M. King, we have one who could do wonders for the much-talked-of attempted reform of the stage, but who thinks of applying to her? Meanwhile she is spending (I do not say wasting, there is no waste in her work, and there are no minor arts) her originality on illustration, to the great advantage of the bibliophile, and every form of graphic art (her landscapes in pen and ink as in water-colour are most striking), the design of toys and furniture, and, generally, on bringing beauty and novelty wherever she has an opportunity to exercise her unusual faculties.

Another Englishwoman winning laurels abroad is the pianist Norah Drewett who has done a considerable share in making known the works of Arnold Schönberg. Norah Drewett is an artist of too much taste and earnestness and not enough flourish to be the craze in England, but the more cultivated audiences of Germany, Austria and Belgium know her worth.

The death of Mistral, the Provençal poet of whom it has been said that had he written in French he might not have become as celebrated, recalls an anecdote about the call he paid on Barbey d'Aurevilly the first time he came to Paris. "What," cried Barbey on seeing him at his door, "are you Mistral, you?" "It is I." "So you are not a shepherd?" "Alas, no." "You've been educated?" "Alas, yes." "You have a degree, perhaps?" "I have." Barbey drew himself up and looked ferociously at the bard. "Monsieur, when one is called Mistral and lives at La Crau, one does not wear gloves; one wears goats' skins, one keeps the flocks and one eats olives on the mountain slopes—or else, one warns the public in a preface."

The story of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, and his adoption by David, is the subject last treated in poetic prose, occasionally varied with metre, by O.-W. Milosz (Eugene Figuiere, publisher). I have not the same enthusiasm for this work as for "Miguel Mañara" but here is typical quotation. It is from a speech by Mephibosheth:

"Qui suis-je donc, ô David, que tu aies regardé cette chose sur le chemin? Et pourquoi ne serais-je pas bien où je suis, avec l'aveugle, et la femme qui pleure en mangeant, et le chien dont le poil a changé d'odeur?"

Je suis tout petit, et me suis égaré, et depuis fort longtemps on ne me cherche plus. Cependant je sais une chose ou deux. Je sais que le cœur du puissant n'est pas comme celui de l'homme sans femme et sans pain; et qu'il est fermé au langage des choses qui ne sont pas une possession.

J'ai grandi parmi les humbles, partageant le souci du passereau, buvant l'orage dans mes mains; et sans plainte; car dans tout l'espace il n'est pas de solitude. L'air même qu'on respire est le souffle d'un.

Et maintenant, mes pieds ne me portent plus, je suis comme la pierre que la vie habille de mousse; et ma tête est une maison où tout va mal (car la mère est morte)."

In the last number of "Le Double Bouquet" M. André Germain chastises Mr. Arthur Ransome for that opportunism which characterises so much of modern literature and which consists in sending one's name through the world associated to that of some great (dead) man of assured fame, and Lord Alfred Douglas for his denial of his master. "Voici," writes M. André Germain, "que se dresse encore contre lui (Oscar Wilde) le plus imprévu des insulteurs et des bourreaux, celui qu'il avait si follement aimé, Lord Alfred Douglas. . . . Depuis deux ans Lord Alfred Douglas s'est si audacieusement profané lui-même qu'il nous donne le droit de parler de lui librement comme d'un mort. . . ."

As to Mr. Ransome, he has given proof—thinks M. Germain—of unpardonable coarseness in not withholding certain too painful or private divulgations.

"Fantôme douloureux, Wilde se lève au delà de l'infamie et de la gloire pour lamenter plus simplement son cœur et . . . murmure: 'Pour vous j'ai tout risqué, tout prodigué, tout perdu, mes années et mes œuvres, ma réputation et ma liberté, ma vie même. Et c'est vous qui m'infligez ce nouveau supplice à l'heure où la rage même de mes ennemis semblait s'arrêter; où tout autour de mon souvenir s'apaisait et s'assoupissait, tout sauf les voix expiatriques de la Souffrance et de la Poésie.'"

And M. Germain concludes by observing, wisely, that these noisy revindications will not change the opinions of the "moralistes officiels" who have once for all judged Lord Alfred Douglas. While the admirers of his sonnets will, in spite of all, continue to admire them. "Il aura beau écrire sur son ami des centaines de pages, ses admirateurs ne se souviendront que de ces quelques vers si simples, si discrets et si nobles qui, au delà de ses improvisations de témoin et de journaliste, le rachètent et le purifient."

SAINT FIACRE.

P.S.—My last letter bore the Channel passage worse than ever. Thus an *amiable* publication called the "Life Happy" became an "animal publication"; the "*deed*" became the "dead" in the account of the Calmette murder, while in the sentence: "envy and malice in aiming its shafts" also contained a printer's error, but it was obvious.—SAINT FIACRE.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

(Chapter I.—continued.)

BY JAMES JOYCE.

THE hushed class continued to copy out the themes. Father Arnall rose from his seat and went among them, helping the boys with gentle words and telling them the mistakes they had made. His voice was very gentle and soft. Then he returned to his seat and said to Fleming and Stephen:

— You may return to your places, you two.

Fleming and Stephen rose and, walking to their seats, sat down. Stephen, scarlet with shame, opened a book quickly with one weak hand and bent down upon it, his face close to the page.

It was unfair and cruel: because the Doctor had told him not to read without glasses and he had written home to his father that morning to send him a new pair. And Father Arnall had said that he need not study till the new glasses came. Then to be called a schemer before the class and to be pandied when he always got the card for first or second and was the leader of the Yorkists! How could the prefect of studies know that it was a trick? He felt the touch of the prefect's fingers as they had steadied his hand and at first he had thought he was going to

shake hands with him because the fingers were soft and firm: but then in an instant he had heard the swish of the soutane sleeve and the crash. It was cruel and unfair to make him kneel in the middle of the class then: and Father Arnall had told them both that they might return to their places without making any difference between them. He listened to Father Arnall's low and gentle voice as he corrected the themes. Perhaps he was sorry now and wanted to be decent. But it was unfair and cruel. The prefect of studies was a priest but that was cruel and unfair. And his white grey face and the no-coloured eyes behind the steel rimmed spectacles were cruel looking because he had steadied the hand first with his firm soft fingers and that was to hit it better and louder.

— It's a stinking mean thing, that's what it is, said Fleming in the corridor as the classes were passing out in file to the refectory, to pandy a fellow for what is not his fault.

— You really broke your glasses by accident, didn't you? Nasty Roche asked.

Stephen felt his heart filled by Fleming's words and did not answer.

— Of course he did! said Fleming. I wouldn't stand it. I'd go up and tell the rector on him.

— Yes, said Cecil Thunder eagerly, and I saw him lift the pandybat over his shoulder and he's not allowed to do that.

— Did they hurt much? Nasty Roche asked.

— Very much, Stephen said.

— I wouldn't stand it, Fleming repeated, from Baldyhead or any other Baldyhead. It's a stinking mean low trick, that's what it is. I'd go straight up to the rector and tell him about it after dinner.

— Yes, do. Yes, do, said Cecil Thunder.

— Yes, do. Yes, go up and tell the rector on him, Dedalus, said Nasty Roche, because he said that he'd come in to-morrow again and pandy you.

— Yes, yes. Tell the rector, all said.

And there were some fellows out of Second of Grammar listening and one of them said:

— The senate and the Roman people declared that Dedalus had been wrongly punished.

It was wrong; it was unfair and cruel: and as he sat in the refectory he suffered time after time in memory the same humiliation until he began to wonder whether it might not really be that there was something in his face which made him look like a schemer and he wished he had a little mirror to see. But there could not be; and it was unjust and cruel and unfair.

He could not eat the blackish fish fritters they got on Wednesdays in Lent and one of his potatoes had the mark of the spade in it. Yes, he would do what the fellows had told him. He would go up and tell the rector that he had been wrongly punished. A thing like that had been done before by somebody in history, by some great person whose head was in the books of history. And the rector would declare that he had been wrongly punished because the senate and the Roman people always declared that the men who did that had been wrongly punished. Those were the great men whose names were in Richmal Magnall's Questions. History was all about those men and what they did and that was what Peter Parley's Tales about Greece and Rome were all about. Peter Parley himself was on the first page in a picture. There was a road over a heath with grass at the side and little bushes: and Peter Parley had a broad hat like a Protestant minister and a big stick and he was walking fast along the road to Greece and Rome.

It was easy what he had to do. All he had to do was when the dinner was over and he came out in his turn to go on walking but not out to the corridor but up the staircase on the right that led to the castle. He had nothing to do but that; to turn to the right and walk fast up the staircase and in half a minute he would be in the low, dark, narrow corridor that led through the castle to the rector's room.

And every fellow had said that it was unfair, even the fellow out of Second of Grammar who had said that about the senate and the Roman people.

What would happen? He heard the fellows of the Higher Line stand up at the top of the refectory and heard their steps as they came down the matting: Paddy Rath and Jimmy Magee and the Spaniard and the Portuguese and the fifth was big Corrigan who was going to be flogged by Mr. Gleeson. That was why the prefect of studies had called him a schemer and pandied him for nothing: and, straining his weak eyes, tired with the tears, he watched big Corrigan's broad shoulders and big hanging black head passing in the file. But he had done something and besides Mr. Gleeson would not flog him hard: and he remembered how big Corrigan looked in the bath. He had skin the same colour as the turf-coloured bogwater in the shallow end of the bath, and when he walked along the side his feet slapped loudly on the wet tiles and at every step his thighs shook a little because he was fat.

The refectory was half empty and the fellows were still passing out in file. He could go up the staircase because there was never a priest or a prefect outside the refectory door. But he could not go. The rector would side with the prefect of studies and think it was a schoolboy trick and then the prefect of studies would come in every day the same, only it would be worse because he would be dreadfully waxy at any fellow going up to the rector about him. The fellows had told him to go but they would not go themselves. They had forgotten all about it. No, it was best to forget all about it and perhaps the prefect of studies had only said he would come in. No, it was best to hide out of the way because when you were small and young you could often escape that way.

The fellows at his table stood up. He stood up and passed out among them in the file. He had to decide. He was coming near the door. If he went on with the fellows he could never go up to the rector because he could not leave the playground for that. And if he went and was pandied all the same all the fellows would make fun and talk about young Dedalus going up to the rector to tell on the prefect of studies.

He was walking down along the matting and he saw the door before him. It was impossible: he could not. He thought of the baldy head of the prefect of studies with the cruel no-coloured eyes looking at him and he heard the voice of the prefect of studies asking him twice what his name was. Why could he not remember the name when he was told the first time? Was he not listening the first time or was it to make fun out of the name? The great men in the history had names like that and nobody made fun of them. It was his own name that he should have made fun of if he wanted to make fun. Dolan: it was like the name of a woman who washed clothes.

He had reached the door and, turning quickly up to the right, walked up the stairs; and, before he could make up his mind to come back, he had entered the low, dark, narrow corridor that led to the castle. And as he crossed the threshold of the door of the corridor he saw, without turning his head to look, that all the fellows were looking after him as they went filing by.

He passed along the narrow dark corridor, passing little doors that were the doors of the rooms of the community. He peered in front of him and right and left through the gloom and thought that those must be portraits. It was dark and silent and his eyes were weak and tired with tears so that he could not see. But he thought they were the portraits of the saints and great men of the order who were looking down on him silently as he passed: Saint Ignatius Loyola holding an open book and pointing to the words *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* in it, saint Francis Xavier pointing to his chest, Lorenzo Ricci with his biretta on his head like one of the prefects of the

lines, the three patrons of holy youth, saint Stanislaus Kostka, saint Aloysius Gonzaga and Blessed John Berchmans, all with young faces because they died when they were young, and Father Peter Kenory sitting in a chair wrapped in a big cloak.

He came out on the landing above the entrance hall and looked about him. That was where Hamilton Rowan had passed and the marks of the soldiers' slugs were there. And it was there that the old servants had seen the ghost in the white cloak of a marshal.

An old servant was sweeping at the end of the landing. He asked him where was the rector's room and the old servant pointed to the door at the far end and looked after him as he went on to it and knocked.

There was no answer. He knocked again more loudly and his heart jumped when he heard a muffled voice say:

— Come in!

He turned the handle and opened the door and fumbled for the handle of the green baize door inside. He found it and pushed it open and went in.

He saw the rector sitting at a desk writing. There was a skull on the desk and a strange solemn smell in the room like the old leather of chairs.

His heart was beating fast on account of the solemn place he was in and the silence of the room: and he looked at the skull and at the rector's kind-looking face.

— Well, my little man, said the rector, what is it?

Stephen swallowed down the thing in his throat and said:

— I broke my glasses, sir.

The rector opened his mouth and said:

— O!

Then he smiled and said:

— Well, if we broke our glasses we must write home for a new pair.

— I wrote home, sir, said Stephen, and Father Arnall said I am not to study till they come.

— Quite right! said the rector.

Stephen swallowed down the thing again and tried to keep his legs and his voice from shaking.

— But, sir . . .

— Yes?

— Father Dolan came in to-day and pandied me because I was not writing my theme.

The rector looked at him in silence and he could feel the blood rising to his face and the tears about to rise to his eyes.

The rector said:

— Your name is Dedalus, isn't it?

— Yes, sir.

— And where did you break your glasses?

— On the cinderpath, sir. A fellow was coming out of the bicycle house and I fell and they got broken. I don't know the fellow's name.

The rector looked at him again in silence. Then he smiled and said:

— O, well, it was a mistake, I am sure Father Dolan did not know.

— But I told him I broke them, sir, and he pandied me.

— Did you tell him that you had written home for a new pair? the rector asked.

— No, sir.

— O well then, said the rector, Father Dolan did not understand. You can say that I excuse you from your lessons for a few days.

Stephen said quickly for fear his trembling would prevent him:

— Yes, sir, but Father Dolan said he will come in to-morrow to pandy me again for it.

— Very well, the rector said, it is a mistake and I shall speak to Father Dolan myself. Will that do now?

Stephen felt the tears wetting his eyes and murmured:

— O yes, sir, thanks.

The rector held his hand across the side of the desk where the skull was and Stephen, placing his hand in it for a moment, felt a cool moist palm.

— Good day now, said the rector, withdrawing his hand and bowing.

— Good day, sir, said Stephen.

He bowed and walked quietly out of the room, closing the doors carefully and slowly.

But when he had passed the old servant on the landing and was again in the low, narrow, dark corridor he began to walk faster and faster. Faster and faster he hurried on through the gloom excitedly. He bumped his elbow against the door at the end and hurrying down the staircase walked quickly through the two corridors and out into the air.

He could hear the cries of the fellows on the playgrounds. He broke into a run and, running quicker and quicker, ran across the cinderpath and reached the third line playground, panting.

The fellows had seen him running. They closed round him in a ring, pushing one against another to hear.

— Tell us! Tell us!

— What did he say?

— Did you go in?

— What did he say?

— Tell us! Tell us!

He told them what he had said and what the rector had said and, when he had told them, all the fellows flung their caps spinning up into the air and cried:

— Hurroo!

They caught their caps and sent them up again spinning sky-high and cried again:

— Hurroo! Hurroo!

They made a cradle of their locked hands and hoisted him up among them and carried him along till he struggled to get free. And when he had escaped from them they broke away in all directions, flinging their caps again into the air and whistling as they went spinning up and crying:

— Hurroo!

And they gave three groans for Baldyhead Dolan and three cheers for Conmee and they said he was the decentest rector that was ever in Clongowes.

The cheers died away in the soft grey air. He was alone. He was happy and free: but he would not be anyway proud with Father Dolan. He would be very quiet and obedient: and he wished that he could do something kind for him to show him that he was not proud.

The air was soft and grey and mild and evening was coming. There was the smell of evening in the air, the smell of the fields in the country where they dug up turnips to peel them and eat them when they went out for a walk to Major Barton's, the smell there was in the little wood beyond the pavilion where the gallnuts were.

The fellows were practising long shies and bowling lobs and slow twisters. In the soft grey silence he could hear the bump of the balls: and from here and from there through the quiet air the sound of the cricket bats: pick, pack, pock, puck: like drops of water in a fountain falling softly in the brimming bowl.

[END OF CHAPTER I.]

Memoirs of a Charming Person.

II.

SECOND CONVERSATION.

THE Count evidently expected me to spend the whole night at my prayers. The next morning he sent me a note suggesting we should go together into the country, to some solitary place, where we could talk alone. We drove down to Ruel, and on the way I observed him closely. He seemed

to me more tranquil and self-confident than a sorcerer has any right to be: I was impatient to hear what more he had to say, as I couldn't understand how such a man could wreck his intelligence over visions, to which I gathered he was subject. He talked politics, and seemed pleased that I had read Plato, whom he declared might be practically useful to me some day. When we reached Ruel, he would not admire the garden, but went straight into the labyrinth. Then he lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, and sent up a prayer, which I give in full.

"I praise," cried he, "the Eternal Wisdom in that it prompts me not to hide any of its ineffable truths from you. How happy you will be, my son, if it has the goodness to dispose your soul in such a manner as is necessary towards these great mysteries! You will learn to control all nature: the Supreme Intelligences will be proud to obey your wishes; the demons will not dare to go where you are; and the invisible peoples, who inhabit the four elements, will be happy to be the ministers of your pleasures. Do you feel, my son," he ended, "that heroic ambition which is the certain mark of the Children of Wisdom?" He asked me several other things: whether I wished to serve God only, and realised what it is to be a man; whether I did not object to being a slave, when I was born to be a king, and so on, coming at last to the question, would I renounce all things in order to reach the heights to which I was destined? I had hoped in vain that he might be led into treating his subject, and I was disappointed; also the word "renounce" frightened me, and I thought he might ask me to give up my baptism—or heaven. I exclaimed against this idea of renunciation, but he told me it was absolutely necessary, as Divine Wisdom would not enter into a sinful body, or a prejudiced mind. Then he bent down and whispered in my ear, "There is one thing incompatible with wisdom: you must give up all carnal intercourse with women."

I laughed and told him he had let me off easily, as I had expected him to propose some strange renunciation; as for women, I had done with them long ago. "I'm chaste enough," I added, "thank God. But as even Solomon didn't escape corruption, I want to know what measures you propose taking to evade the other sex? And after all, why shouldn't every Adam in the Paradise of Philosophers have his Eve?"

"As there does not seem to be any difficulty about your giving up women," he answered, "I will tell you one of the reasons why the Sages insist on this condition. When you are one of Us, you will discover, by the help of occult drugs, that living in the elements are most charming people, cut off from us by the sin of Adam: you may think the air was made for birds and flies, the water for whales, and the earth for moles, and that fire is of no use at all. The air is really full of multitudes of beings, proud but friendly; fond of science, subtle-minded, and the sworn foes of the silly and ignorant; their wives and daughters are beautiful like Amazons."

"What," cried I, "do you mean to say these hobgoblins are married?"

"You needn't be alarmed," said he. "All this is only teaching from the ancient Cabala. You must put away all you have ever learnt, or you may have to acknowledge your own obstinacy, when you have had more experience. Let me tell you the rivers and seas also are full of Undines and Nymphs; very few of them males, of great beauty. The earth is full of little Gnomes, who look after treasure, and mines, and jewels; they are friendly too, ingenious, and easy to control: they have little wives, but pleasing, with curious habits."

He went on to tell me about the Salamanders, and when I disclaimed any wish to know such ugly creatures, he defended them ardently; saying that as they are made of the purest element, fire, they are all the more beautiful, besides being interesting in

their minds, and attitude towards life. They have, he said, laws and customs like ourselves, but their great grief is that they are mortal, though they live for many centuries. The Sages, it appears, interceded with God Himself on their behalf, and it was revealed to them that Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs and Salamanders were all capable of gaining an immortal soul by mating with a man, particularly if he were a Sage; whilst the males of these beings had the same advantages through marrying our daughters. These curious facts had been misinterpreted by the early Christian fathers, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and the rest; who, knowing these Elementals had had intercourse with our women, imagined they were fallen angels. At first they begat famous giants, and those bad Cabalists Josephus and Philo (seeing all Jews are ignorant) fell into the same error, but St. Augustine may have been more enlightened, for he does not give any definite opinion as to the nature of those fauns or satyrs who pursued the African women, in his day.

"Ah," the Count exclaimed, warming to his subject, "it is absurd to impute the fall of the angels to love of mortal women, or to suppose that all the charming adventures of these Nymphs and Sylphs are the work of the devil. There is nothing wicked in it all, and philosophers recognise the intrinsic innocence of these creatures, who are only trying to become immortal!"

I confess I was a little startled at the folly involved in giving up women in order to provide souls for Sylphs, but he wouldn't listen to my objections. Indeed, he tried to point out that I should only gain by the exchange; these invisible mistresses never grow old, he explained, and are always full of love and gratitude; and the most beautiful woman is horrible when compared to the least of them. I finally lost my temper with him, and accused him of unutterable folly, and of being a ridiculous visionary: adding that I feared one of his Sylphs would carry him off to hell in the midst of his transports. I was a little alarmed when he became really angry, went some distance from me with a paper covered with hieroglyph, and began muttering what I supposed was an invocation to some evil spirit; I vowed if I escaped with my skin from this adventure I would have no more to do with Cabalists. He recovered himself, however, after a time, and assured me I was one of the elect, according to my horoscope, so I accepted the inevitable and made up our quarrel, though I told him I did not think he would find it easy to convert me to his system of philosophic gallantry; even though it were supported by such authorities as Plato, Pythagoras, Celsus, Porphyry, Trismegistus, and such like; and that he must find me some way of escaping from the charms of these elemental ladies. Whereupon he said that some Sages had never loved them, and kept themselves for higher things, but that I need not fear having to waste time on ceremonies or superstitious practices, such as some great prelate had once said were necessary, because all Cabalists conduct such affairs according to Nature only. Nature, he went on, gives us the means of resuming intercourse with these elemental things, through a process of purification. Adam, after his fall, became impure and gross, and could not unite any more with creatures made of subtle fire, air, water, and earth; but the Sages have discovered that certain simple ceremonies can re-establish the currents between ourselves and them, and make intercourse possible again. It is most difficult, he confided to me, in the case of Salamanders, as the solar element must be imprisoned by means of concave mirrors, in a glass globe; a solar powder is thus formed, which in time endows us, so to say, with an igneous nature, and gives us powers over the fire people.

The Gnomes and Sylphs, I gathered, do not live so long as the Salamanders, and are more anxious

to become immortal, and their favours are easier; their respective elements must be purified by being kept in a globe for a month, exposed to the sun, and then chemically separated. After taking the smallest possible dose for some weeks, a man will find he is beginning to see these creatures, and have power over them.

"So without ceremonies, or charms, or barbarous words," finished the Count, "one can reign over all these peoples. You see the Sages are more innocent than you thought, and it can all be done by natural means." I replied that he rather tempted me to become a chimist, but he seemed to think I was to be initiated into a higher order of philosophy by quite other processes; he had only explained these things to lull my terrors.

I wanted to know, further, how it was he knew that the Nymphs and Sylphs ever died, seeing they could become immortal by union with human beings, and he answered that as there were many more of them than there are Sages, not all of them could get immortality; some do not even want it, because they are afraid of suffering the torments of the damned; this fear on their part, he added, is a direct temptation of the devil. Again, he continued, the oracle of Apollo said that all the voices speaking through him belonged to mortal creatures; and what do you suppose that tremendous voice meant which sounded all down the coasts of Italy, saying, *Great Pan is dead*, unless it was the people of the air telling the people of the sea that the first and oldest of the Sylphs was dead?"

I questioned him further as to whether the Elementals were not the false gods of the heathen, and he made some curious statements on the subject, which I give as well as I can remember. "The Elementals," he said, "are stronger than the devil, so, acting at his instigation, they became very powerful—troubling the elements of air, sea, and land, till the human race began worshipping them as gods, the Supreme Being not having troubled himself about the salvation of the world at this time. The devil, however, did not get all he had bargained for out of the compact, for the souls of many heathen escaped him." I could not understand this, and the Count went on to tell what he called a great secret. "As Sylphs acquire an immortal soul through commerce with a human being who is predestined to salvation, so a human being who is predestined to damnation can forfeit his immortality, through commerce with a Sylph, and be delivered from the horrors of the second death." I cried out against a theology which savoured of Jansenism, and went further than anything the Fathers had ever imagined, and which would certainly shock our judges. But the Count had evidently no great opinion of our judges. "Why, they are foolish people," he said. "They once condemned two priests for an intercourse of forty years with Sylphs, and also Jeanne Vervillier, who had been trying to ensure the salvation of a Gnome for thirty years. But it is getting late," he added suddenly, "and you will be faint from want of food."

I then discovered that it was quite unnecessary for him to eat. The Sages, foremost among whom was the great Paracelsus, could do without food for twenty years if necessary, living on half a scruple of solar quintessence; and one need only make a preparation of earth, such as I have already described, to keep any ordinary man alive without food, by applying it to his navel, and renewing it when dry: Paracelsus is said to have lived six months under these conditions. Further, by taking the Cabalistic medicines a Sage frees himself from all the lesser bodily functions, as all superfluous matter is got rid of by insensible perspiration.

After this speech, we went to the village, and had a slight meal.

M. DE V.-M.

The Theatre.

QUEEN'S THEATRE—"THE MELTING POT."

I AM willing to believe Mr. Zangwill that the true American has not yet arrived more, I acknowledge my worst hopes thus realised in such an assertion. But I am sorry that Mr. Zangwill should exhaust himself by shouting about it in the wilderness. It is, doubtless, a madness in the blood, this vision of a Western Superman, but the hoarse frenzy of its expression is a pity. It is the more unfortunate in that the thought of the play, dragging behind the rhetoric, "distraction in's aspect," is worthy better treatment. True, the vision of America as "God's crucible," the birthplace of a new race and a new spirit, left me sufficiently sceptical. But at least, the play has an idea beyond the wooing of a virgin, the course of domestic love, or the flogging of a dead social theory, and I am almost persuaded that its descent into melodrama is due less to insincerity of purpose than to a flickering inspiration. The moral has been too often pointed: if in your natural sluggishness you are but geese, abstain from imitating the eagle soaring to the stars. I am sorry to have brought Dante into this company: let me return to Mr. Zangwill.

On the strength of having survived a Jewish massacre in Russia, David Quixano permits himself an ecstatic faith in the greatness of America. Her Statue of Liberty is a torch of God; her past and present are in the melting-pot with refugees of every nation, from whose fusion is coming the Colossus of the world. I mix my metaphor to suit the general harmony. David's emotions have bubbled over into an American symphony that breaks all rules and records. Its inspiration is that of the whole play, a faith that in the seething mixture of races, traditions, and creeds, the spirit of the future is striving to create. Throughout four acts the spirit works, achieving a climax at the end of each. In the first act Vera Revendal, Russian aristocrat and revolutionary, flings into the pot her hereditary detestation of the Jew, moved thereto by her love for David, which further inspires her to offer the first instance of Mr. Zangwill's unnatural poetic aspirations—"So was David with his harp—a sweet singer in Israel": the effect of her words, following on her first revolution, is one of gushing insincerity. I do not, however, forget the complete melting of the Irish servant-girl, whose impatient scorn of Jewish customs, David softens into remorse and tenderness. The progress of the spirit, attempting loftiness, achieves a sense of strain. David, who is, *ex hypothesi*, an artist as well as an apostle, refuses to have his symphony played for the amusement of millionaires. He is repaid by the friendship and services of a comic famous conductor and the avowed love of Vera. The first barrier to the rising tide of emotion is Mendel Quixano, David's uncle. He refuses to be dissolved, and bids David choose between his people and the Gentile. David makes ready to leave his home, but since contrast is a fine dramatic art, he must first go through a scene, too offensive to be tragic, too stupid to have even the bitterness of the grotesque. It is a Jewish feast, and he fiddles while his heart breaks audibly, and the wizened old grandmother, ignorant of the tragedy, capers hideously to the tune of an Irish jig.

In the third act, Mr. Zangwill attempts so hardily that his failure is the more painful. Baron Revendal comes to New York to save his exiled daughter from the shame of a Jewish marriage. His affection and her eloquence bring him to the verge of the pot, but at this moment, David himself, forsaking his faith and his love, hardens beyond all desire to be melted, recognising in Vera's father, the man who stood at the head of his company with a face of hate, while the mob murdered David's mother, father, little

brother and baby sister before his eyes, intervening only to order his men to fire on—the Jews. In monotonous tones David describes the horrible scene: we are almost persuaded of its reality. But when he turns to repulse Vera, tragedy dies in rhetoric. He repents him of having listened to "the voice of the butcher's daughter," and Vera, agonising on her knees, curses her father and his proffered love in the high manner. The general orgy of emotion ends in the capitulation of the iron Baron. He hands his revolver to David and asks to be shot. It is no matter; he died some time before this improbable sacrifice. And David, moreover, does not shoot him, but lays the revolver on the table in what might have been a stupor, or, as my Hebrew neighbours interpreted, a disinclination to degrade himself by shedding Christian blood. He picks up his violin, noting a broken string, and the curtain falls on the supreme effect: David, stumbling out, murmurs, "I must get a new string for my violin." The Baron is left lamenting and alive. After this I was moved by nothing in the last act, neither by the extraordinary behaviour of the canvas river, nor the spectacle of the dramatist giving the final jerk to all his strings in turn. The Symphony is successful; the Irish servant-girl reappears in a gelatinous state, half-Hebrew, half Adelphi-Irish; David has returned to the ideals of his symphony, and the end sees him embracing Vera in a detached sort of way. Only the elder Jew remains unmelted, and even he manifests a tendency to liquefaction, albeit ungraciously. Grand anti-climax, superb self-surrender, reminding us somewhat of the final ecstasy of the mystical union with Absolute Nothingness, wherein is "neither soul nor intellect; nor has it imagination, opinion, or reason, or intelligence."

These tears are for an overworked inspiration. It would appear that in writing "The Melting-Pot," Mr. Zangwill had three ideals. There was first his thought of a new country to whose future all is possible, even a fusion of races to produce the higher race. A living faith, and whether it came from Heaven or Germany, still a faith; turning, as all faiths, to hysteria in the hands of lesser followers. Hence when Mr. Zangwill would be most sublime, he is most bombastic or most ludicrous. Moreover, he seems to have had the desire, quite distinct from his measure of inspiration, to write a good acting play, with due clash of pity and mirth, due inflation at the end of each act, due resolution of the discords in final harmony. And further, there are the persistent attempts at fine English—worse, at prose poetry—which jar on the ear throughout the play. Here is no question of technical incompetence falling below a high subject. "The Melting-Pot" was not written by an ineffectual artist, but by a melodramatist with a message. So much the worse for the message.

VAUDEVILLE THEATRE—"HELEN WITH THE HIGH HAND" (OR CAPTURING UNCLE).

If playwrights, as well as novelists, were not concerned to cater solely for women, this play would never have been manufactured. As it is, the form taken by its flattery of the feminine has a mild significance. When men, even of average intelligence, can be found to pat the red right hand of the Suffragette, how should women not take pleasure in the stage triumph of their gentler and more vulgar methods? Helen Rathbone suffers no defeat by circumstance, and—after the manner of her kind—is deterred by no consciousness of her vulgarity. She wears a silk skirt that rustles, and she can make an omelette with four eggs. By virtue of these graces she establishes herself in her uncle's house and lays hands upon his cash-box. Thereafter, she proceeds to bargain with more grace if with less frankness than her less reputable sisters. Only the terms of

the bargain are different. If he will not buy Wilbram Hall for her to live in, she will join her mother in Canada. Threats and strategy, and in the last resort, her uncle's need of her, bring success within the reach of her high hand. She has Wilbram Hall, she has the average sensual man to shout at her, and her uncle's income to keep them both, and all as her feminine right. Very touching. Do not mistake me: I do not suggest that this harmless playlet is an elaborate satire on the modern woman, who, with no more brains than the average male, claims, in addition to food, clothes and shelter, that she should be endowed with the pretence of power and carefully shielded from any realisation of her inferiority and incompetence. Far otherwise: Helen's high hand, Helen's tears, wiles and bartering are viewed with quite complacent admiration by a feminine audience. This is as it should be. We have advanced far since the days when Nora Helmer banged the door from the outside because her husband had treated her with as much consideration as she had shown herself capable of appreciating. Our modern Noras are more far-seeing, if equally irritating. They stay on the right side of the door and take all they can get, while giving nothing. Such of them as are possessed of a certain modicum of intelligence are likely to insist upon being comrades as well as wives, which most often means that they have no children, write bad books, and take up a position of spiritual superiority on every occasion. Helen Rathbone has, at least, no pretence to brains above such as are necessary to calculate the amount of her uncle's income. Neither will she prate of comradeship. She is in fact nothing more than the ordinary woman, having abandoned a few of the ordinary pretences, and taking advantage of the modern admiration for the female presuming upon its femininity. "Helen with the High Hand" should be commended to general feminine study.

I have not forgotten the curtain-raiser, a graceless farce, with neither wit nor meaning, but a dialogue suggestive of fine-drawn music-hall patter.

STORM JAMESON.

Correspondence.

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS—While quite willing to publish letters under noms de plume, we make it a condition of publication that the name and address of each correspondent should be supplied to the Editor.—ED.

PRO DOMO SUA.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

These two months I have been getting spanked by instalments, and I think it is time to howl. If I did not howl I fear I should be called a Good Child or some other name with contemptuous capital letters.

First, then, I take notice of the extract from Bergson which is commended to my study. But it is the first time I ever heard that the ancient Greek sense of the word "idea" was to govern the modern use of the word. I thought it was a commonplace of the history of philosophy that Descartes, wisely or unwisely, had given to that word a sense totally different from the one which it bore previous to his time, and that ever since Descartes the word "idea" has had nothing to do with the "ideas" of Plato and other Greeks except when one is writing on the history of philosophy, as Bergson is here. I cannot think it was Bergson's intention to prescribe that the modern world should use "idea" in the sense he is discussing; for he himself, before he gets to the bottom of the column as reprinted by you, uses "idea" in the modern way. He is not guilty of confusion; he uses "idea" in both senses in one column, but he does not mix them. The number of "Views and Comments" over which I started was less cautious: it began by using "idea" in a sense which I understand is to be identified with the sense defined by Bergson, and then it went on to apply its conclusions to the modern use of the word in such phrases as "We want a man with ideas." This is as if I should argue that lying is unworthy of a man of energy because, first, deceit is the natural weapon of the weak, and, second, the heart beats less vigorously when lying than when standing.

But I cannot but welcome Bergson into the field against me: for if he is an opponent he is one of the most obliging ones I

ever met. Being on the topic of Greek philosophy, he takes up the well-known Greek arguments to prove the impossibility of motion, and identifies this defiance of common sense with their disposition to worship ideas. The idea, the particular state of existence conceived as stationary, corresponds to any one of the various places in which the moving body is conceived to stand successively; but just as the moving body never stands in any of these places, so man, or any other progressive being, never is in any of the states represented by our ideas—he is only passing through them. So Bergson. Let us accept the analogy, and instead of considering merely the metaphysical question of the possibility of motion let us consider its application to practical life. Suppose the moving body to be a man; and suppose that he intends to make his motion more or less satisfactory to himself. He has nothing more urgent to consider than these places to which or through which he is to pass. Ordinarily his only rational purpose is to pass to or through these places; the choosing of his route so that the process of movement itself shall be satisfactory is of some consequence indeed, yet of minor consequence. Even if he is not aiming at any place—if he is walking through unknown country for pleasure or exploration—he must still from time to time have an eye to places that he does not wish to pass through, or he will come to grief. Does Bergson's analogy hold in all these respects? Decidedly it does. In the conduct of human life, intelligent planning is possible only by having an eye to these states represented by the "ideas" which form the landmarks of our course, choosing which of them we wish to reach, and, as a very urgent matter, noting the ones to be avoided. Whether we stop at the ideas or not, we must steer by aiming at them if we are to live sensibly. That is what the page of Bergson comes to.

As to the "Views and Comments" of January 1st, it will be more convenient to contradict them than to make out that they agree with me. The first thing is that in my "meticulous" discussion of human affairs I leave out human nature. But, as usual particulars are lacking. Surely it is no news that when a charge of this sort is made in general terms only, it is always open to the accused to reply, "You are mistaken; you yourself are the one who does that." Which answer, omitting the first three words for meticulousness' sake, I hereby make. I admit that I should approach with fear and trembling a non-competitive examination on my ability to see into what those queer creatures called men are thinking, or will think, or will do. But as for a competitive examination—what have I done that is as bad as the allegation that the governing classes in general are agreed to teach the subject classes a morality which they, the governing classes, laugh at in their hearts, and that the various mouthpieces of opinion who inculcate this current morality are the agents suborned by the governing classes to keep the masses submissive? The notion started in a century when, or in a social stratum where, it was normal to assume that the man who preaches what I don't believe must be a wilful liar and hypocrite; and it has been handed down by constant tradition through a succession of those who think so little of the infinite variety of human nature, and who take so little note of the fanatic's superiority to the swindler in the matter of convert-winning, that the echoing of this old piece of shallowness seems to them the most obvious solution of the problem of the existence of differences of opinion.

I see it is hard for the most meticulous to resist the temptation to meet an opponent with the opponent's own weapons, whether the weapon be pyrotechnical oburgation or anything else. But at least I am talking in my own defence, for it is I who am accused of letting the Capitalist Press, that organ of the dominant, bamboozle me into accepting the "grotesque suggestion" that Asquith was afraid of Larkin and was actuated by his fear. Now I solemnly protest that on this side of the water the suggestion would not seem at all grotesque. The typical American politician is more afraid of the man who makes him lose votes and elections than of any other creature that breathes. My only error consisted in assuming that politicians in England were the same kind of cattle. I cannot so easily excuse myself for transferring to Asquith another character of the American politician, who is delighted with the idea of armed opposition because he knows that the voters will think of Abraham Lincoln's saying, "It is better not to trade horses while crossing a stream," and will keep their government in the same hands till that darling government has had its fight out, after which, if they have any scores to settle with the administration, they will settle them at the next election. Now there are plain geographical reasons why Lincoln's words should not be as proverbial in England as in America; so, since the soundness of the maxim is not at all self-evident (few rulers have ever kept changing the general of the army in the midst of a campaign so persistently as did Lincoln himself; when he uttered those famous words he was arguing for his own retention in office, which is obviously a very different thing), it follows that I had no ground for assuming that Carson's doings would be as welcome to Asquith as they would have been to Roosevelt in a like situation.

Next, you claim that the mathematical calculation of the cause of interest on money is invalid because the circumstances of the different borrowings are so endlessly various. If the argument were pertinent it would prove only that the rates of interest would differ from transaction to transaction; which is not a very crushing answer when the opposed argument had started from a frankly fictitious rate of interest so as to emphasise the fact that the rate has nothing to do with the present question. But hard experience teaches us that these things do admit of mathematical treatment even as to rates. Your argument would equally serve to prove that the statistician cannot predict the number of suicides in London next year, the distribution of this number between the different months, and the percentages who will use the various methods of shooting, poisoning, jumping

from windows, etc. Yet the statistician will make these predictions with an accuracy not much inferior to the prediction of the height of the tide at a given port at noon next Friday. Consider the business of life insurance. The life insurance business consists in offering to bet any tolerably vigorous person two to one or three to one that he will never die. The companies make large and steady profits by this rash-looking speculation. Their hope of profit depends on their correctness in reducing to mathematical formulæ (and that before any of the events take place) the resultant of the care a man takes of his health, the physiological processes of his system, the changes of his economic situation, etc.; and also, as a matter not less essential to the insurance business than all these, the rate of interest and the security of investment. When we are inquiring what method of study suits the practical facts of life, the argument of a successfully-filled purse seems to me to be irresistible. Against the record of the life insurance companies' dividends, no demonstration of the uselessness of mathematical study of the laws of interest is worth a picayune.

The editorial paragraphs on interest allege, and seem to regard it as a point of fundamental importance, that "the man who can extort interest is smart or fortunate; the man who has to pay it is unlucky or an inferior." This throws our American multi-millionaires into the unlucky and inferior class, for they are a set of confirmed interest-payers. I am sure that a Rockefeller, a Carnegie, a Vanderbilt, a Gould, generally pays more than he receives in interest, unless those wretched political economists are permitted to extend the definition of "interest" to cover much more than payment for loans. But what is the foundation for this statement that it is the unlucky who pay interest? Does it not rest on the fact that this was generally true among the Hebrews in Old Testament times, probably also in Rome at the time of Sallust's histories, and that you have taken the word of the Hebrew and Latin classics for twentieth-century conditions? At present, if I am rightly informed, most of the borrowing is done by men who borrow a hundred pounds because they hope to make a profit of a hundred guineas, and who in most cases get their profit. I believe there is now seldom a time when borrowers in distress are so large a part of the borrowing world as to produce a great effect on the rate of interest. Banks regularly prefer to lend to people who are not in distress; and once more I appeal to the published dividends as proof that the banks get most of their business on the lines that they plan to get it on.

I suspect that I ought to correlate this about interest with the onslaught just now on the eighth commandment—an onslaught which, with some of the words about the Dublin strikers, shows an ability to take sides against the institution of property. I would say it showed a hostility to that institution if I did not remember equally ardent words in behalf of property from the same pen. At any rate, I do not think I am misjudging this argument against interest if I say it starts with the assumption that interest is a phenomenon dependent on the institution of property and on one person's consenting to lend property to another. This is discouraging: for I had said that the utility of arguing from definite facts, even though they be fictitious, was shown by the demonstration that interest would still have to be taken into account in the intelligent planning of work even in the absence of property. If the contrary of my conclusion is to be assumed, without demonstration, as a premise for confuting me, how is the argument to go forward?

The point may be made clear by facts that are not imaginary. It was lately argued, by a writer likely to be influential, that the Intercolonial Railway of Canada shows an advantage of government construction over private construction in that the Intercolonial, built out of taxes, is not burdened with an interest-bearing debt and hence does not have to count interest on the cost of construction in making its receipts meet its expenses. It is not denied that the people had to pay the full cost of building: the point is that they paid it in such a way as to escape the charge of interest, so that the payment was made once for all instead of being a continuous burden. What I say is that the continuous burden is not escaped. The people of Canada, even those who are not personally in debt and (if there be such) those whose governments are not taxing them for interest on borrowed money, have nevertheless been losing the interest on the money that was taken from them to build that railroad. The farmer was taxed \$20, say, with which sum he would otherwise have bought a piece of haymaking machinery whose service would have been worth \$1.50 a year to him; if this is so, that \$20 is costing that farmer seven and a half per cent. interest. (To be sure, if a citizen paid his railroad-building tax out of money that would otherwise have been spent in theatre tickets, the railroad—if it is of value to him after it is built—has done him whatever service there is in a law making it compulsory to lay up money instead of spending it all on immediate satisfaction; but I don't believe that was what the praiser of government construction intended to say.) And the like would have been the case if there had been no property in Canada—if all haymaking apparatus had been free to the use of whoever had hay to make: it would still have been impossible to sink in that railroad a quantity of the community's stock of goods without losing the yearly value of the service of those goods elsewhere, and requiring the railroad to make up that yearly value, in addition to its running expenses, if it is to show that it was worth building.

The essential point is that when you use a piece of goods for one purpose you don't get the service which it might have performed if used for another purpose. The division of the transaction between two men, so that one gives up the use of the goods and the other gets it, in which case the first man will not enter into the transaction unless he either does it out of generosity or

gets the interest paid to him, is non-essential just as, if we were discussing the fact that the same bushel of wheat cannot be used for bread and for whisky, the fact that the distiller bought it of the miller would be non-essential. The fact of exchange merely facilitates the measurement of the values involved. (I always wonder how some of those extreme Socialists who would quite abolish exchange would measure their values.)

All this looks very simple. And indeed a German professor has defined mathematics as "the science of those things that are self-evident." But it sometimes takes a lot of explanation to get the self-evident things recognised. A distinguished Austrian professor of political economy, and his disciples, lately spent a lot of work and some money in trying to establish in East Africa a colony based on the principle that the burden of interest can be got rid of by issuing capital gratuitously to all who have a use for it. And in all ages the world has suffered much from those who have believed that interest is a burden imposed by the action of those who find it in their power to extort a payment in excess of what they give. I am persuaded that these persons would not be able to distinguish *THE EGOIST's* utterances from their own.

STEVEN T. BYINGTON.

[1. We referred Mr. Byington to M. Bergson—who is known even if Stirner is not—in rebuke of the Rip-Van-Winkle tone of astonishment he chose to adopt in criticising our criticism of the present all-powerful vogue of "ideas" in the Platonic sense. That tone has now gone and we welcome its departure, whether resulting from a perusal of Bergson or from some other and unknown cause.

2. We do not agree that Descartes' connotation of ideas has superseded the Platonic one, not even in the scholastic backwater of philosophic discussion; still less in that infinitely greater and all-penetrating sphere—the use and development of language. Our present cultural and consequently social existence is based on—and worse still, all its developments are looked to adjust themselves to—conceptions framed on the model of the Platonic idea, justice, equality, liberty, fraternity and the rest of the abstractions and "absolute" ideas. The influence of the Platonic Idea has increased and is increasing: and we consider it our business and pleasure as far as we are able to resist it. The rest of Mr. Byington's remarks—on Zeno's conundrums about motion and their subsequent application to "intelligent planning"—are wide of the point. With "intelligent planning" and its relation to the popular use of the term "idea" unless we are much mistaken we have already specifically dealt.

3. Concerning interest. Mr. Byington began with an assertion that interest was "right" and dragged in Bastiat and Henry George; and this latter dragged in "interest laid up in the cow." We accepted the challenge of the entire force—Mr. Byington, Bastiat, George and the Cow, and offered an analysis with which Mr. Byington makes no effort to deal: for the simple reason, in our opinion, that, thanks to the cow, the position was made impregnable. We do not therefore intend to follow Mr. Byington in further "elucidations of the obvious" anent his Man on the Canadian Railroad. As for the "unlucky" financiers and their tearful plight in paying more "interest" (rent and profit) than they receive, we think the editor of the "Daily Herald" might offer the situation as the subject for a prize essay to small *Heraldites* of tender years.

4. Concerning the relative merits of the Carson and Larkin campaigns we look to current events to spare the labours of our pen.

5. Finally, property. There is no contradiction between the belief that private property is desirable, beneficial and necessary and the belief that when persons are suffering to the point of starvation through the lack of it, a sensible course is to acquire what they need by any means within their power. Indeed, of the statement "Private property is necessary and good," the statement "Therefore, if you are in lack of it, obtain it by any available means," far from being a contrary is, humanly speaking, its corollary.

Mr. Byington is apparently boggled by an assumption which his mind is harbouring, not about the benefits of private property, but of some "sacred, inalienable right" to the retaining hold of it.—Ed.]

* * * *

DIVINE INSPIRATION.

To the Editor, *THE EGOIST*.

MADAM,

Have you ever wondered why people are so nasty to each other in the correspondence columns of newspapers?

After reading Mr. Aldington's reply to my letter I found many sharp and would-be witty things on the tip of my tongue, but—having let days slip past, I left them unsaid: and now I feel very little can come of any discussion on this point between him and me. His letter was quite cheap and unworthy of him. And he mistook my meaning and fell to speaking about literary technique, about which he certainly knows much more than I do. You see, I did not ask him to "say definitely what is the origin of a work of Art." I asked him to "tell us about the origin of works of Art" and I said: "If they are not Divine, what are they?"

I thought that one whose study it is to produce nice phrases, "to present the exact vision, the exact Image" (to use his own words), would clear up this matter; and since he objects to the time-honoured old phrase "Divine origin," give us, for our generation, something in its place.

Instead, he takes two moderns, one a painter, with vision, the other a scientist with vision—both more modern in their thinking than himself—and Carlyle whom I had also quoted, and, putting the three together, says: that judging from my quotations "they are submerged in Victorian slush."

Leaving the two of our own time to take care of themselves, I must resent the "cleverness" which uses such adjectives for Carlyle and the Victorians, who were great in their day, and did much towards creating our own.

It does not seem to me to help our Art to-day, this attempting to belittle the Victorians, just because in the natural course of evolution we are beyond, and therefore out of sympathy with, them. The Greeks are further historically, but in the ever-revolving cycle—to this age—like the Italian Renaissance—is rising upon Greek tradition. But from Greek days to this day the contributions to our knowledge have altered our points of view, and not least must be counted the contributions of great Victorians, of whom Darwin was only one—so that we are really far more Victorian than we are Greek—even Mr. Aldington himself—who in his jeers at Christian dogmatic beliefs is so often like Wilde that he would hardly recognise himself if I held the mirror to his face! When he says: "This kind of Divine Inspiration business has been the damnation of the arts in England" I can agree with him. But the reason I find is that the artists whom it damned were small and inspired by the letter and not by the spirit. In a word, they HAD NO Divine Inspiration, but only a Church creed from which all poetry, and therefore much truth, had been ruthlessly expunged. Ever since the Bible was written this doing away with truths and poetry in religion has been going on.

One has only to take the Jewish marriage service, the Roman Catholic edition of it, and the final Protestant one, and compare them, to see what the process has been, and what it is that has been the damnation of the arts in England may be judged, perhaps, from this comparison.

His next point is one with which, on the face of it, I can but agree. But it concerns the technique of art expression, and does not touch the vital root of Art origins. And on examining it closer I see that it—and all the rest of his letter—contains dangerous half truths.

For instance: he is thrilled by the vision of Flaubert "seeking with toil and concentrated genius for the *exact word*," and he says further on that "All great poets are exact."

I know what he means, and am with him there, but he merely scratches the surface of these things. He knows as well as I do that the laborious seeking for the exact word did not make Flaubert a poet.

He must know, too, that great poets are not the only people who are exact.

Every scientist, great and small; all architects, even builders; and all engineers—even plumbers, are exact.

Every mathematician, all financiers, every decently successful man of business, even shopkeepers are exact. Bankers, even bank clerks, are laboriously exact; also soldiers and all navigators. These may all be great poets, but if they are it is not because of their exactness. Nor can the giving of "emotions, experiences, observations in exact phraseology" make them into artists:

Technique ALONE is not art, an obvious truth that our eager people of the younger generation so nearly forget: and Mr. Aldington too truly bares their thin soul for us when he gives them, and himself, away, saying "The difficulty—the real problem for the artist—is to present the exact emotion, the exact vision, the exact Image." This is all very well, if I may take it for granted that he is allowing for the emotion, the vision, the image being *greatly conceived*, in the first place. If he said: "The problem for the artist is—given Divinely Inspired (or greatly conceived) Thought—to present the exact, &c., &c." But he rubs in his adoration of the dressing and fitting out, for later he says: "Its value as art depends upon the method of presentation." This, again, is one of his half truths—and a very plausible one. But the truth is that its value as art depends upon the Greatness of the Conception, or the Inspiration in the Thought. Given a fine enough, and beautiful enough thought stream, I believe an artist will—with the fullness of his creative power and desire—evolve a method of presentation worthy of it, even though he spend his whole life toiling for the "exact word" or "method of presentation." But words, *as such*, are empty. And in our Art and Literature, even in the little of our poetry that I have read, there is too evident the love of uninspired words, so carefully and often charmingly strung together that one is sad to find they are so often merely a jingle, no matter how clever their stringer.

I agree that it is a bigger and more lasting thing to make "New Images" than to make "a religion of Abstractions with capital letters." But the real religions, by which millions of souls have been swayed, have been founded by Prophets who, if they did not write poems, spoke such poetry that it has dwelt ever since in the hearts of men, and poets wrote down their words, or re-delivered them by word of mouth, and this is when poets have been the Leaders of Men—which brings us back to where we started.

Mr. Aldington, in the course of an article, said that the works of (so-called) Divine Origin were nothing of the sort. They

were, he affirmed, "works of art." And I wondered why he had taken one thing and deliberately made it into two—into two things not even related to each other in his mind.

I may have expressed myself badly in my letter, I am not yet master of words. But it is clear to me that when he makes the—to him—discovery that the poets who wrote the religions, sometimes created works of art, he falls into a grave error in thinking that forever ends any question of these works having had Divine Origin.

And when I ask him about the origin of works of art, he answers me with platitudes about technique.

The fact is that Art is a natural development, and has its origins in the Origin of the other World-Growths. You may call This "God" and "Divine," or you may call It "Creation," or "Force," or "Evolution," "First Cause" or—with Leonardo—"Il Primo Motore." What you call It doesn't seem to matter much, but a new and modern phrase, from a poet like Mr. Aldington, would be acceptable; for false meanings have got attached to old, threadbare phrases, and so Truth is veiled and all obscure, and modern art dashes headlong anywhere. Having no longer any dealings with her Mother, Nature—and by Nature I mean that which creates not only bodily things but also our busy brains, our wildest and our gentlest feelings and all the whole swing of experiences, emotions and Images. We very badly need some phrase to clear our knowledge, our understanding, in regard to THAT WHICH SETS GOING the machines of Art Creation. The ancients founded their arts, and their religions too, upon what they knew of the facts of Life.

We are founding our Art and our non-religion on nothing—it seems to me: passing whims—far less important than April showers—seem to cause a whole new school of technical emptiness to spring up anywhere.

Nature, observing from Her Vantage ground, must wonder!

Not that I want realism. No, for in the Laws of Nature, even the little we know of them fills us with intangible, indefinite and elusive mystery. Scientists are recording facts, but artists of the younger generation are ignoring both facts and mysteries, and thinking only, it seems, of drawing attention to themselves by one BLAST after another upon their trumpets of tin.

Exmoor.

AMELIA DOROTHY DEFRIES.

* * * *

AN ANSWER.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

In reply to "C. S. H.'s" letter and that of Beeban and Noel Teulon Porter I would like to say that the information they wish can be found in "Le Bréviaire de l'Amour Experimentale" by Jules Gyot (page 110). I am not aware that his statement has ever been contradicted in France.

Paris.

H. S. C.

* * * *

MARRIAGE.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

When people have the impudence to proclaim that they have no room to give reasons for the extravagant and licentious theories they are advocating, one would at any time be rather a fool to take them seriously. But the Porters, at the same time as they calmly expect us to accept their words of wisdom without question, give us a sample of what their dogmas are worth. They started off with a confident, see-how-intellectual-we-are statement that a certain "fact" had been quite forgotten, and on this based their reforms; but at the first breath of criticism they completely and helplessly collapse, admitting that proofs exist that the same "fact" has *never* been quite forgotten at all. To go into the intricacies involved in these statements or to touch on the many irrelevancies of their letter is not worth my while.

Madam, I made no secret of my ignorance of sex matters (with many thanks to the Porters for their kind offer, I am afraid that six-volume books of technicalities, even if I had time to skim them, would not help me much: if they will insure me £100 a year for life I will undertake to prove my genuine desire to come up with Truth, by devoting the rest of my life to the investigation of some of our problems)—I do not disguise my ignorance on sex matters, but this, Madam, I know, that when human beings have for countless ages agreed to repress as far as possible (if practice could only touch theory!) such strong desires as those of sex, it is bumptious stupidity even for the Twentieth Century to throw it overboard without even finding out the reasons which led the far-away ancients to point this uneasy road. Men do not restrain themselves for nothing: the reasons that were good enough for the founders of this morality may be still in working, though they have been forgotten. As I said before, it is the greatest blunder the *would-be* rationalist (Heaven forbid that I should call the Porters rationalists!) can commit is to assume that morality is irrational. Let the Porters confine themselves to expounding their grand theories in places where they will be allowed room to do themselves justice in the matter of proof; and then let them not dodge, as they do in

their letter, the crucial point, namely: Is sexual intercourse a "need" at all, and it is expedient to satisfy these desires and how far? This will involve a consideration of the effects bodily and mental (not so much the chances of disease) of sexual indulgence.

Edinburgh.

R. R. W.

ON THIS SPIRITUAL REALITY.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

A friend—a Bahaist—speaks much to me of the *Spiritual Reality*. I think that he means by it, after all, what I and my kind mean by the Ego, but I would not say for sure. I think he means that Thing which is before Abraham was, the Ghost at the bottom of the world, That which the mystics declare, not without authority, to be the only reality at all, the Unknown which the scientists meet in all places and gibber about with new words—That which is in all of us, which is we, and which is the one thing certain and undeniable, in this whole swirl of life—That which is *aware*. But I would not say for sure. My friend the Bahaist might reject all this as chatter. Most folk do.

"Will you admit?" I ask him occasionally to make talk, "that this *Spiritual Reality* utterly transcends human nature and human psychology?"

I am always at a loss to make out just how he regards it. When I flourish my arguments about Time, he falls back upon the mystic attitude and will have none of me. "A million years from now, a billion years from now," he says, "I say like the mystics that we have it here." "But you say Time is a reality." "It certainly is," he says. "Then I say to myself 'Tiddlediwash,' and quit arguing. We never get anywhere by arguing, anyhow."

But this talk about the *Spiritual Reality* is going on around us all the time these days. It always has. And of whatever creed we are, though we flounce second by second from mysticism to pragmatism and back again, we have to face after all this self-evident fact: *the Spiritual Reality must utterly transcend human nature and human psychology—nay, it must utterly transcend this whole world at our finger-tips*. Do not the scientists themselves say that all this shall one day dissipate into thin smoke? Perhaps to begin over again. Do they not track down the most mazelike known clot of matter to a weird Reality that they call Force—or God knows what? Do they not admit that after all they have found a devil in it? They have come to that pass wherein they admit that this world is the apparition of a Ghost that they know nought of working strange wonders in a strange place after a strange manner that they name Evolution. They have stolen up with their spectacles upon an uncanny devil, a demon, a ghost beyond all words. "The mountains and woods have their day, have their day"—all this that we wot of now shall go as a whiff. But the Ghost we have always with us. And a Ghost terribly aware of itself. This Thing must transcend all human nature and all human psychology. Because man is but "a bubble blown up with breath, whose wit is weakness, whose wage is death." He is an atom that blows off in the whirl of evolution. This biped with its intricate and interesting mechanism of thought shall be swallowed into darkness no less certainly than that old intricate and interesting evolutionary foam called the Dinosaur. We must admit that, unless we think in terms of Wednesday and Thursday.

And now further.

"Will you admit?" I ask my friend, "that the *Spiritual Reality* of the world is present in the consciousness of a dog?"

The Bahaist laughs and says something to the effect that a dog has no consciousness. He is under the delusion that I am attempting to be clever. I'm not. I am as serious as death. Perhaps I used the wrong word. Perhaps I should have said: "Will you admit that the *Spiritual Reality* is present in the awareness of a dog?" But perhaps the Bahaist would have rejected all such talk anyhow, under the impression that I was trying to decoy him into the brambles where he would tear his pants. In a way I was. I should like to see him tear his pants. I should like to see him do justice to that dog.

Man is a Time-product. The Ghost inside of him transcends Time—at any rate, we would quite possibly all go mad if we didn't think that it transcends Time. But the Ghost is not the man. Man is a Time-product just as the bull-frog and the weasel and the pole-cat are. Just as this world is. Let my friend flounce into mysticism for rebuttal of this, all he please. In so doing he spirits himself altogether out of human nature into the great pool of Being and proves the point.

Man has got to be recognised as a Time-product. The usage of the word Man in a symbolical sense for the spirit Inside is poetical. And when we realise that this phenomenal thing, man, will pass like a whiff as his forbears have passed, when we are faced nose to nose with the fact that the apparition of man is as fleeting as the glint of a leaf in moonlight, we have got to admit that he is a very wee matter indeed as regards this *Spiritual Reality*. At this day man is the highest product of evolution. Very well. We shall have uncanner things yet. At one time the Dinosaur too was the highest product of evolution. (I may be mixed up on my Saurians. I wouldn't swear to this.) At another time still dissmaller and more distant the lobe-tailed trilobite was lord of creation. Yes, and way to

the devil farther back than that, a weird and self-sufficient and very restless wisp of smoke was the world. There wasn't in those days any such animal as man. Where then was this *Spiritual Reality*? Where was Moses while the light was out? I believe he was there.

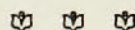
I believe we have all got to admit that the *Spiritual Reality* was there. The Ghost was there in the awareness of that Dinosaur, that trilobite, and in the—who shall say blind?—activity of that wisp of smoke. Just as it is here to-day beneath the phenomenal scum of force-clots known as Matter, underlying man and the hills and the winds. We have got to admit that it is weirdly manifest in every phenomenon. That is the only hole we can crawl into.

We are driven after all to the conclusion of the German: our real being is as truly outside of what we call our selves as inside. Our real being is the being of the *Spiritual Reality*, which underlies the world. These legs and arms and clots of grey matter will pass like wind. Have we not been told so again and again? God knows we know it. But before Abraham was, I am. I am not a trilobite, I am not Abraham, I am not this amalgam of cells, of impulses, of sensations, this biped which drinks and eats, which can multiply seven by nine. I am the world. I am the Thing which is aware of itself and of the dream it is dreaming. And I am as truly that dog as I am this biped. My awareness is not shut into the limits of a skull. Neither is that dog's. Before Abraham was, I am. I can cut my throat a thousand times, but cannot escape the world. Where is he that died o' Sabba' day? *He is writing this*.

This is the true Egoism. I stammer in my talk because I am young. But wiser men than I have written it plainer.

JACK MCCLURE.

Paris.



WOMEN AND MEDDLESOME LAWS.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

Mr. Kerr says women's vote in California has produced meddlesome old-maidish laws. Is it certain that the women are the cause? All the new Anglo-Saxon democratic countries seem to be addicted to this kind of thing. I do not know whether it is because they are new, because they are Anglo-Saxon, or because they are democratic; but I incline to the latter. Canada, where Mr. Kerr lives, has not yet given votes to women, but Canada forbids the transmission of Neo-malthusian articles through the post; also I read lately of a man being gaoled for six months in Toronto for speaking to a girl in the street (all he said was "Good evening"); also, as this tyranny of the Respectable does not by any means limit itself to sex matters, Canada shares with Maine the discredit of being the home of Prohibition, which (though I loathe alcohol myself) strikes me as the most insolent piece of tyranny any majority ever practised on a minority.

But do not regard me as a keen advocate of votes for women. I would like much better to take away votes from men, a vote being usually only an assertion by A and B of their right to control C's private affairs. Your leading articles always maintain that might is right, and the inventors of votes and majority-rule evidently thought the same. I do not see much chance yet of overthrowing this tyranny and confining it to its narrow proper province of roads, main drains, and prevention of violence; but I hope that when women have gained full partnership in the tyranny, a good deal of excellent rebel energy now wasted in demanding that partnership will be turned towards the obtaining of freedom. For those women who really want freedom will soon find that they are no better off than before, perhaps a trifle worse. It is too soon yet to hope for such accessions in California to the scanty ranks of freedom; but I would like to hear if Mr. Kerr sees any signs of it.

Cumberland.

CALDWELL HARPUR.

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